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THE SMART SET

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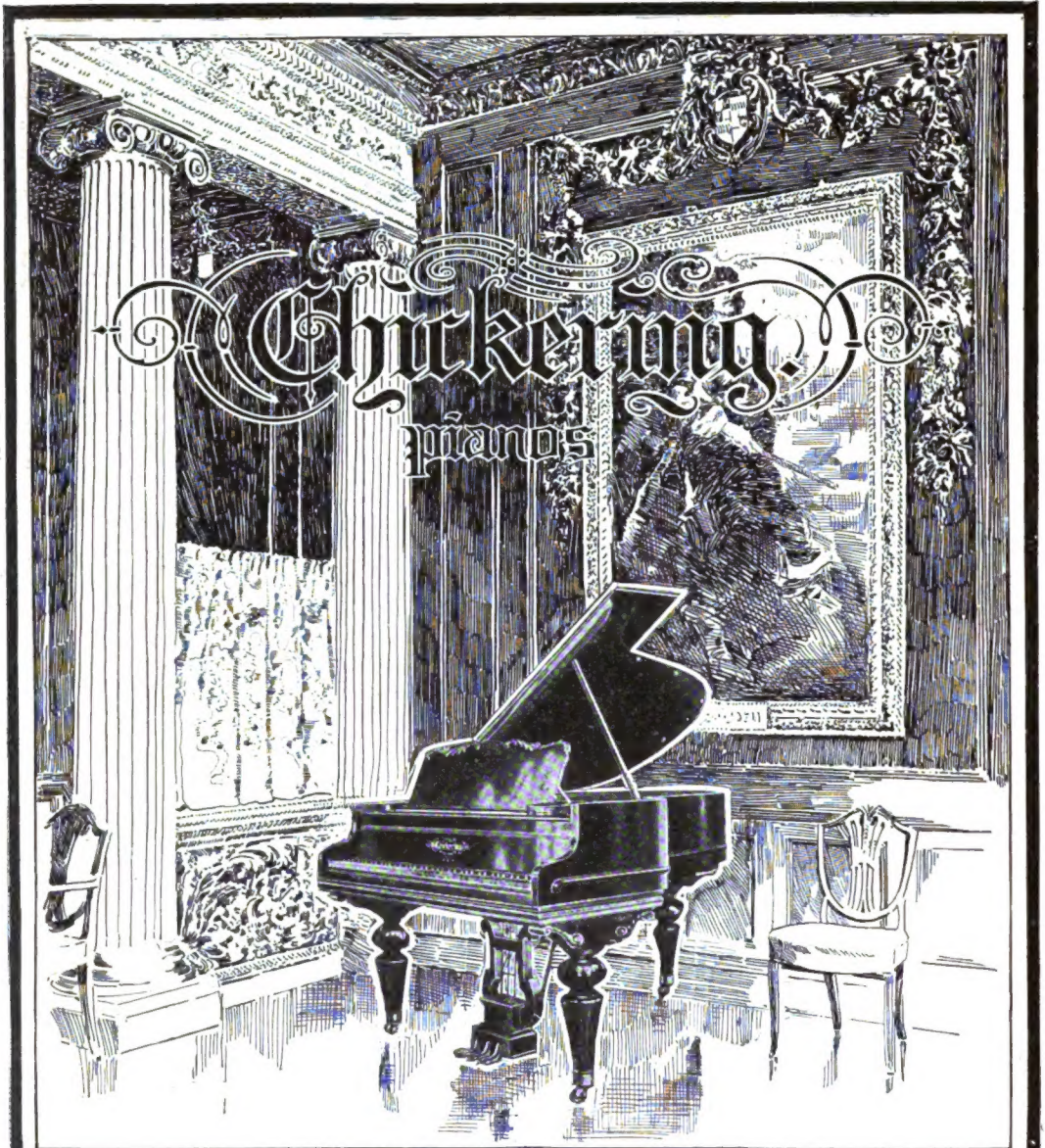
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New York

THE WAGON AND THE STAR

By IRVINE GRAFF

*Love is life's end; an end but never ending;
All joys, all sweets, all happiness awarding.
Love is life's wealth (ne'er spent, but ever
spending)*

*More rich by giving, taking by discarding.
Love's life's reward, rewarded in rewarding—
Thou wilt not learn to live unless thou learn
to love.*

"I SHALL be ready, quite ready, in fifteen minutes."

Kit hung up the receiver and began to move about the room with quiet, definite purpose. In a remarkably short space of time her dress suit case was packed and placed near the door, and Kit herself, in a severely tailored black suit and small lynx turban, was standing before her desk glancing over a pile of letters which had been brought to her a short time before. To a casual observer Mrs. Trenor appeared never to hurry; her movements were leisurely, her presence distinctly restful. It required more than a glance to discover that every motion was fraught with meaning, that every step taken was with an express object in view. The dark eyes, looking out so squarely from under straight, characteristic brows, were vitally alive and suggested a mind of extraordinary clarity and vigor—an effect considerably moderated by the sweeping dark lashes.

Her lips trembled into a smile of anticipation as she selected a letter bearing a foreign postmark and slipped it into her bag. The others she thrust into a drawer and rapidly locked the desk.

She was downstairs and on the front steps when an automobile drew up to the curb.

"Come, hurry, get in!" growled a

deep voice, while two deep set eyes peered at her through the gathering darkness.

She seated herself composedly beside the huge man in the shaggy fur coat and allowed him to tuck the rugs snugly about her.

He touched a lever and the machine leaped forward.

"Are you warm enough—in that fool jacket?"

"Quite warm, thank you."

"You're tired—after that last case you were on?"

"I am not at all tired."

As they passed a street light he turned to look at the serene face beside him, but could find no trace of weariness.

"She is made of steel!" he ejaculated to himself with involuntary admiration. Only an hour before he had deposited her at her door after four weeks of the most trying nursing. "She can have no nerves—no heart!"

"Perhaps not," answered the heartless one composedly, for he had unconsciously spoken aloud. "Long ago, Dr. Gibson, you told me a woman of my profession could not afford to possess either."

"That's right, Mrs. Trenor." Dr. Gibson's deep voice rumbled on from one unintelligible remark to another, a word only here and there giving her the trend of his thoughts. He brought himself up with a jerk.

"This promises to be a bad case."

"Yes?" Kit's mind was at once on the alert.

"Yes—a bad case. I shall have to operate at once, I fear."

They had left the city and were

June, 1909—1

traveling along a soft dirt road. Kit scarcely heeded the direction—she was intoxicated with the exhilaration of the mad pace.

"Isn't this good!"

"Glorious!" she answered with unreserved delight.

"Better than horses?"

He could not see that her eyes clouded, nor did he feel the sudden weary droop to her shoulders. Impatiently he demanded an answer.

"To me," she forced herself to reply, "nothing can equal the knowledge of a good horse under one—to feel him quiver with life and determination and—yes, *fight!*" She laughed a little uncertainly. "Automobiles don't fight, you know; they may take a mean advantage of one's ignorance, but that's far from being an honest, open battle with living flesh and blood and a living mind to back it! I—"

"Yes?" prodded the doctor encouragingly. He really wanted her to go on.

"I broke a colt once to the saddle. I never before had met with a horse so *drunk* with the sheer mad joy of being alive. It was difficult to tackle Mesrour without shadowing that joy. I did not want, you see, to tame him, which I could have accomplished only by breaking his spirit."

"You must have loved that horse."

"Yes."

"Well, in the same way I love my old machine," grunted the doctor after a pause. "It has no nerves and it gives me opportunities to work off all my bad temper before I see my patients. Ah, here we are at last."

They swerved sharply into a private driveway and drew up before a large, beautiful old house. Kit looked curiously about her, but could distinguish little through the darkness.

The front door opened and the butler came forward hastily to take her bag. They entered a square hall, lit at one end by a big open fire which cast a softened glow over the fine paintings on the walls and the priceless rugs on the floor. A great Russian wolfhound reluctantly left his position beside the

fireplace and came forward with inquiring dignity to receive them.

Kit's eyes had wandered dazedly about the hall and now grew big with terrified fascination when the old dog detached himself from the shadows and stood before them gravely questioning. Then, with his own peculiar dignity, his white brush moving slowly to and fro, he thrust his long nose into her hand and whined.

"You—you will have to get somebody else, Dr. Gibson. I—must go."

Furiously Dr. Gibson wrenched himself free from the tense, straining fingers which had unconsciously clasped his arm, and bent an angry face upon her.

Unheeding him, she continued to watch the dog.

"Dvorak!" she whispered hoarsely. "Dvorak!"

Again the dog's white brush moved in recognition of the greeting, and he pressed more closely against her side.

"Come!" cried the doctor roughly. "We will go upstairs. For heaven's sake, hurry! It's wrong to delay even a minute!"

The butler had disappeared with the bag; the big dog stood immovable with his head still under Kit's hand; a log fell heavily in the fireplace amid a hiss of sparks.

"I cannot stay, Dr. Gibson. You will have to get somebody else. I—must go."

"Go! When each minute may cost us a life! Good God! What is the matter with you?"

"The matter is this, Dr. Gibson—I am Gordon Reid's divorced wife. Now, do you ask me to stay?"

"Come upstairs, come upstairs!" implored the doctor wrathfully. "He will not know you. The man's unconscious already. We must get to him at once. Later, yes, after the operation—you can go. Now, come!"

There was a rustle of skirts in the hall above and a woman came quickly down the stairs.

"Will you go up at once, Dr. Gibson? Your assistant has everything ready. If you need anything further, I shall be right here. I—I shall stay here until

it is over." She moved to the fireplace and sank down into a big chair. The dog, after an instant's hesitation, left Kit and joined her, laying his long head on her knee.

Kit had no further time to speculate on her own false position until Dr. Gibson was giving his last peremptory orders before his departure.

"He will pull through all right," he declared, glancing approvingly at the immaculate nurse before him, whose cool, capable resourcefulness never ceased to delight him. "I will send another nurse—but I am not so sure but that a shock will be good for him. He did not want to live—he may escape us yet unless we give him something to think about when he wakes up. Two wives in the same house should give a man food for thought!" In the interests of his case he brutally overlooked the feelings of the woman necessary for the experiment.

When he had left, Kit seated herself in a low chair by the bed, her eyes keenly noting the changes eight years had wrought in the familiar face. The old wild restlessness was discernible still, a restlessness which one felt instinctively to be the most salient characteristic of the man. The dark hair was turning quite white at the temples, adding peculiar distinction to a head of strongly chiseled features and of remarkable carriage. Kit wondered if the charm of his personality still lingered, if the old innate loveliness could still be read in his eyes.

"Kit! Oh, my God!"

The eyes were open now and sanely clear.

She braced herself, every professional instinct at once on the alert, and met his wild look serenely.

"You have been ill," she said. "You must not talk."

She reached over and adjusted the shade on the lamp, and then leaning back in the deep chair folded her hands idly in her lap.

Gradually there stole into his wildly beating heart the old familiar strength of her presence. He tried to figure out why she should have come to him—

then—when he needed her most; but the strain of thinking hurt his head cruelly. He would be content merely to know she was sitting there beside him, her exquisite profile clearly defined against the soft shaded light. He sighed and fell into a deep rest.

II

HOTEL BRITANNIA, ROME.

KIT, my dear, we are having the time of our life. "Our life" in this case is, I assure you, grammatically correct, for our lives have grown together exactly after the fashion of that dear, ridiculous old apple tree in our back yard at home—don't you remember it?—which started out as two distinct trees and then suddenly decided to combine forces. On our tenth anniversary the brilliant inspiration struck both of us to hie us away for another honeymoon, and we are now "doing" Italy. But—this is strictly between you and me—I fervently wish Italy did not possess so many galleries, and that each gallery did not possess so many pictures. My dear, I have artistic indigestion—you can't tell me I haven't. With the galleries of Venice and Florence gulped wholesale and the appalling number of "masterpieces" ahead of me still to be devoured in Rome, it is little wonder my digestion is upset. For two weeks I attempted desperately to fit mosaics into an alligator's back. The beast was a furious-tempered individual and nastily particular as to the patterns to be employed. Each time I failed to please him a spiteful nip was the penalty. (I later learned that each nip meant a *flea*.) I should hate, Kit, to be a criminal imprisoned in Rome. If we are eaten up here, in this splendid, big, airy hotel, what *must* a Roman dungeon be like? By great good luck I was able finally to make a masterly copy of Guido Reni's "St. George," and His Alligatorship graciously consented to acknowledge himself pleased with the result and to take himself off, with an absurdly complacent grin.

The last I saw of him he was slithering into the Tiber, the sunlight sparkling on his astonishing mosaicked back. Then I became aware of a funny little oily-haired *dottore* who looked preternaturally grave as he informed me that I had had a mighty close shave—Jack's liberal interpretation!—with the fever, but that I was now out of danger. Poor Jack! The dear fellow looks ten years older and is literally worn out with the anxiety of these last weeks when I was having misunderstandings with that unspeakable alligator. Jack is really a connoisseur of pictures, and will stand gloating for an hour before a smirking Madonna with an impossible child in her arms while he reels off information by the yard on its history and the history of the inconsiderate artist who painted it—all of which I am duly expected to swallow and digest. No, I say again, it is little wonder I have suffered from indigestion; but I do not dare breathe the real nature of my illness to Jack, for the dear soul is in his element. If I should ever say a word against a picture he would call himself a brute for having hauled me about so indefatigably when I didn't want to go, and would not poke his nose into another gallery. I know him!

This hotel is owned and run by an Englishwoman, who is married to an Italian nonentity, a dear, fat, comfortable, motherly soul with big, sleepy eyes and big, capable hands, who comes upstairs to see me three times a day. There is a "lift" of course, a curious contrivance which will at a pinch hold four persons, if the four are willing to dovetail themselves in like the corrugated segments of a Chinese puzzle. It apparently has will and character of its own, for it seems to be perfectly willing to carry passengers *up*, but balks absolutely when asked to carry them *down*. The English Signora must consider herself as averaging more than the combined weight of four medium-sized persons, for she never uses the lift. Our rooms are on the sixth floor, and yet, three times a day, Signora D'Ambrosio works her

way up. I can hear her wheeze all the way from the bottom. She has a pug who looks irresistibly like her, and who also wheezes when climbing the stairs. I have become genuinely devoted to the two of them. She—the Signora, not the pug—made me a wonderful plum pie today in honor of my convalescence. The first glimpse of the thing almost threw me back into the alligator's clutches, but Jack manfully ate enough for two, and the dear soul was beamingly satisfied. I think she has become quite attached to me, but she is always very formal as she shies at my title.

Kit, do you remember when you vehemently upbraided me for marrying a title, declaring that no possible happiness could come from it? Your mad unreasonableness would undoubtedly have broken our friendship if I had been content to let you go. Let me tell you this—the ten years of my married life I have been supremely, riotously happy, so happy that I used frequently to whisper to myself the fear that such a superlative state could not last. I no longer whisper, Kit, for I realize now that my happiness is founded on Jack's great faith in me—on his unquestioning, sturdy, undemonstrative love. If trouble ever comes, it must of necessity come from me, and I shall not dwell on the absurdity of that. Needless to say, I could write this to no one but you; but having reached this confidential stage I intend to be alarmingly frank. Your nature is such a contrary mixture of frankness and reserve that, plainly speaking, I don't even yet always understand you. Why should you be content eight years ago to let me learn the details of your divorce from the newspapers? You yourself never once mentioned it. Kit, dear girl, it is not spite when I say that I could have told you so. You and Gordon were friends of mine—dear friends—and I could get you both in perspective. As each of you was an avowed follower of the goddess of freedom, why in the world did you go and destroy a rare and true friendship

by shackling it? I can easily imagine what followed your marriage. You goaded each other to desperation, I do not doubt. I also do not doubt that at the bottom of your hearts each one loves the other still. I can see your quick flare of anger, Kit; but it's true—it's true! Why do I talk this way after all these years, especially when Gordon has another wife—that, too, I learned from the newspapers—and lives in the same city with you? I don't know. Although I am your oldest chum, since we arrived at the indefinable grown up age never once have I had the temerity to dive beneath your ever inscrutable surface. Now that I'm below, not even equipped, if you please, with the diver's safety rig of your sanction, I intend to stay until I have said a few more disagreeable things:

Billy Henderson is in Italy, following us about from place to place like a forlorn yaller dorg. He pretends to copy pictures, but all he is after are the crumbs I am willing to throw him—namely, your weekly letters. Yes, I confess it, he has read them all, for months. And why not? You write brilliant letters, but like your own brilliant, unreadable self they are terribly unsatisfactory. Rarely a word about yourself—usually just clever, vivid, satirical sketches about your last patient whom I don't care a rap about and neither, I am sure, does Billy. Billy possesses the same faithful brown eyes, the same sweet-tempered smile and the same adoration for you. He told me— Don't blame him; he is only a big overgrown boy and we were looking at the Colosseum by moonlight. The Colosseum, I am truly thankful to say, has neither picture nor statue to its name. I never thought about it before, but I fancy that is why I enjoy it so hugely. Where was I? Oh, yes—he told me that he never could look for happiness in this world apart from you, and you had forbidden him ever to see you again. Kit, I know you are not happy. Would you be more *unhappy* if you

married Billy? Please read to the end of this letter. There is a great deal of loveliness in Billy and he is now an acknowledged genius. Jack, who knows what he is talking about, says that before long he will be the painter of the day—if he doesn't go to the dogs beforehand. He is beginning to drink heavily, and his work—although brilliant—shows the effects of it. It lies in your power to be the salvation of the man, Kit, and the man's genius. Couldn't you glean a little happiness by doing this? On the steamer we met a young Greek who was naïvely pleased with himself because he originally made the observation that "love is electricity." Later he came across the same words in the book he was reading by Marie Corelli and, profoundly disgusted, he found nothing clever in the aphorism. I find it distinctly clever, especially when applied to you. Both Gordon and you are electrically, vitally alive: when you joined forces the same result must have ensued as from crossed live wires. Billy is more negative in quality and would act as a very good insulator to your headstrong current. I know I have little right to interfere, Kit, but Billy's increasing moodiness and misery have quite depressed me.

This is a very long letter, even from me, but I feel so much better that I wanted to explain my long silence. Then, as usual, I meandered on indefinitely. We are going this afternoon to the Vatican to see—I'm blessed if I remember what we are going to see, although Jack waxed eloquent on the subject at breakfast.

Won't you write to Billy?

Jack sends regards, although he knows you don't approve of him.

Ever devotedly,

BEATRICE.

P. S. Kit, do you remember your wild colt, Mesrou? You vowed you would break him to the saddle without breaking his spirit—which you did. If Gordon had tried the same tactics with you, he might have succeeded. His mistake was in trying to break your spirit. Whether he partially

succeeded or not, I don't know; you two were equally matched. Billy will never attempt to coerce you—he will give you your head. Believe me, Kit, and forgive me.

SEPTEMBER 28, 1907.

B.

Kit folded up the letter—it was the one she had selected from the pile on the desk in her room—and the care with which she placed the sheets back in the right order betrayed the intense concentration of her mind on the things they contained.

It was the second day at Oakhurst and she had been forced to snatch a few precious moments from her first brief rest hour to read the letter. Her patient was desperately, critically ill, and because he seemed less feverish when she was with him Dr. Gibson had not hesitated to profit by his knowledge of the "steel nerves" in her slender, tireless body and keep her continually by Gordon Reid's side.

III

"BEG pardon, ma'am, but he ain't safe for nobody to ride."

Kit smiled brightly at the wizened, bent little old man holding a fretting, mettlesome horse. Hers was an electric smile, and won his grudging confidence by its unexpected imperious sweetness.

"I am used to horses," she answered reassuringly.

"Beg pardon, ma'am"—the old man was keenly distressed—"but I'm the only one he allows to come near him, and I'm the gardener, ma'am, not a stableman at all. Why Mr. Reid keeps such a critter we can't none of us tell, but he won't let Mesrour be sold or ridden. You might think he was a young colt, ma'am, from the hot-headed way he acts, instead of bein' nigh on twelve years old."

"So he is never ridden and yet Mr. Reid won't accept a price for him!"

"No, ma'am, although we thinks Mr. Reid might be satisfied with 'most any price, for Mesrour's jest that drunk

with the joy of livin'—beggin' yer pardon, ma'am—that there is no a-handlin' of him. He's no safe horse for you to ride, ma'am." The man was humbly apologetic in his manner, but evidently determined to finish what he had to say.

"He doesn't look vicious." Kit rapidly noted the quivering ears, the widely distended nostrils, the impatient forehoof of the well groomed horse; but she could detect no evil light in the full, soft, beautiful eyes turned inquiringly toward her black-habited figure. "He doesn't look vicious," she repeated.

"He's not wicious, ma'am, although the boys do say as how he is; but it's his temper which is so divilishly on-sartin—beggin' yer pardon—jest like a woman's. If Mr. Reid hadn't sent for me his own self and told me with his own lips to sidesaddle Mesrour, I never would 'a' done it."

The old intense delight in prospective conflict surged in Kit's heart. She fearlessly approached the black horse, who eyed her with sudden suspicion and distrust.

"Take care!" The cry was involuntary. "He don't like to be patted, ma'am. I think one reason he likes me is because I never pats him. He's a queer critter."

Kit smiled again. That was an idiosyncrasy of Mesrour's colthood which she had invariably respected, and which he had evidently never outgrown.

She gathered up the reins, and barely touching with the toe of her boot the old man's outstretched hand, alighted firmly in the saddle. Mesrour, resentful, undecided, taken wholly by surprise, resolved to be rid in short order of this most unwelcome burden, but found himself, to his own infinite amazement, trotting peacefully toward the big open gate. Old Solomon looked after the superbly erect figure, sitting the unquiet horse with ease and confidence, and cannily shook his head.

"Lor'!" he muttered, with visible joy in his little shrewd eyes. "Lor', but I do say as how Mesrour has found his match!"

Once on the highroad the black horse began a battle which taxed to the utmost Kit's unquestioned command of horsemanship. Again and again she firmly grasped the lock of his mane just in front of the saddle, a resort which in the old days never failed to quiet him; but Mesrour, although he twitched his delicate ears uneasily, had evidently long forgotten its significance. In the end, after a breathless struggle, she won from him a grudging acknowledgment of her mastery. He broke into his long swinging trot and again folded back a daintily pointed ear as her quick word of encouragement reached him.

Kit, intoxicated with the joy of battle, yielded for a time to the riotous joy of the motion. Then soberly she curbed herself, and with the concentration which was her natural gift began to review in perspective the events of the past two months. She upbraided herself harshly for allowing herself to be persuaded by Dr. Gibson's stern order to remain until the patient should either "die or get well." That she had longed to stay and probe with morbid curiosity into the relations existing between Gordon Reid and his wife now made the scorn she felt for her action only the keener. Her aggressive self-confidence generally did away with any annoyance which might result from too hasty decisions; but the insidious doubt she experienced of the wisdom of her decision to remain at Oakhurst gradually undermined her sense of being equal to the situation, and in the end merged into genuine fear as the old fatal charm of Gordon Reid's personality imperceptibly made itself felt.

Long ago her quick wit had made her his match; but of this older, more daring Gordon she acknowledged herself afraid. Beatrice's letter added fresh fuel to her unusual and uncharacteristic morbid retrospection. Kit was in a measure responsible for Billy and Billy's genius. A friend of Gordon's, he had called on them shortly after their marriage and she had been at first attracted by his sunny smile and imperturbable good nature—two characteristics which later exasperated her to

the point of frenzy, for the smile never varied and the good nature proved invulnerable. But to carry out Gordon's laughing injunction to "put a little more wind in Billy's slack sails" she invited him frequently to the house and made brave attempts to overcome her repugnance for the big slouching figure in the ill-fitting clothes and to hide her scorn for the palpable emptiness behind the faithful, doglike eyes. Intellect she revered; Billy's very doubtful intellect had been dulled by many years of physical and mental inertness. Then one day, profusely embarrassed, humbly apologetic, he brought her a sketch he had made of her, a crude, strong, masterly thing which had caught in a remarkable manner the vital spark of life in her eyes and the strange inherent sadness of her features when in repose. She recognized at a glance talent—more than that, genius—in its execution, and in answer to a peremptory question was told confusedly that he had "always drawn," ever since he could remember, in fact. After this, she concentrated her energies to force his slow mind to the vital decision of going abroad to study. And finally he went. She had done more than put a little wind in his sails; she had furnished the pronounced "derelict" with a rudder, controlled by a surely awakened consciousness, little dreaming that the wind of destiny would once more sweep it across her course on the high seas of life, an overhauled, adequately equipped vessel. When at the end of three years a new Billy came back to her, she realized that hers was the responsibility for the love which had forced his return. She had tightened the relaxed strings of his nature until they now vibrated strongly to her touch with responsive chords of mellowed sweetness. And yet, although divorce had separated her from Gordon Reid, she repulsed Billy's offer of marriage with a quick, fierce anger of which she herself was far from understanding the cause. Only long afterward did she remember the low-voiced earnestness of his assurance that a word at any time would be sufficient to bring him

to her from the furthest corner of the earth. In view of these things, was Beatrice so very wrong, after all, to urge her to rescue the man as well as the man's genius?

"And yet, Mesrour," she confided impatiently to the ever restless steed, "Billy rubs me so unbearably the wrong way!" She half turned and laid her gauntleted hand on Mesrour's back. The black horse's heels shot out into the air with swift, unplayful purpose; the narrow ears hid themselves in the thick, dark mane. "That's exactly what Billy would make me continually want to do!" She laughed a little, with wistful amusement. "But I should never have the satisfaction of a glorious, mind relieving kick! By and by I should settle down into a jog trot existence, warranted broken and perfectly safe for ladies to handle. I wonder if life would be much worth the living under those circumstances?"

IV

SHE nodded brightly as Gordon's seven year old daughter, an odd, unhappy mixture of daring adventuresomeness, obstinacy and extreme shyness, ran down the steps to greet her on her return.

"Aren't you afraid of him?" she demanded in genuine astonishment. For the small hand was held out in imperious command and the horse obediently lowered his head.

Winnie looked up with a gay little laugh, the echo of her father's.

"We've been chums for years," she declared with a sudden rush of confidence. "I often go out to the stable to see him when nobody is around. Some day I'm going to ask father to let me ride him. I am sure Mesrour would let me. You see, old Solomon and I are the only people who have found out that Mesrour doesn't like to be patted. It's funny, but he doesn't. He likes to have his nose scratched, but that is the only place he will let people touch him. Even old Solomon has a most dreadful time to groom him."

As Winnie rattled on Kit was conscious of a certain subdued excitement in the child's manner; but she thought little of it as she dismounted and tied Mesrour to the post. Old Solomon was busy digging up a bed on the lawn near the big gate for the first installment of spring flowers, and she concluded it would be time enough for him to get the horse when he was through with his work there. She had reached the front door when a shrill cry of triumph made her turn back. She was horrified to see Winnie's slender little figure sitting confidently in the big saddle on a crouching, quivering horse.

It was the work of a moment for Mesrour to snap the slender hitching strap; and then with ears laid back and nostrils widely, redly distended, he shot, a black streak, down the winding drive.

"Solomon!" Kit called, with all the strength of which her lungs were capable. "The gate!"

Solomon looked up and saw the maddened black horse and the terrified little rider, and in spite of his stiffness reached the gate in time to clang it shut before the great horse's onrush. Mesrour drew his four hoofs together, braced himself and slid, crashing, into the iron bars. The child was hurled over the high points of the gate and fell in the middle of the dusty road beyond, a white, inanimate heap.

"It will mean weeks of absolute quiet—and no excitement, none whatever."

Dr. Gibson turned away for a moment that he might gain courage to say what he intended to say in the most casual manner possible.

"Mrs. Trenor had intended leaving tomorrow," he went on. "But I advise keeping her, for little Miss Winnie already loves her. The child will surely come around, Mrs. Reid, but only time will show whether she will ever walk again. Much is going to depend on the nurse, and Mrs. Trenor is the best nurse I have."

"You will stay?" Mrs. Reid asked. "Win is devoted to you. I should almost feel inclined to be jealous if you

had not been so very good to the youngster." Her laugh was an evident effort and ended in failure.

"I shall stay," Kit declared, without hesitation. "As I told you, my carelessness was the cause of the accident. If careful nursing can give the child back her healthy activity, she shall have all the attention it is in my power to give her."

As he went downstairs Dr. Gibson screwed up his face with keen relish of the most unusual and most interesting situation to be found in this complicated household. His keen, shrewd little eyes had detected before this alarming symptoms in his convalescent patient's condition—symptoms which he had not discovered in his professional capacity as physician. He told himself, as he buttoned up his great shaggy coat and stepped into the vibrating automobile, that another week would end in a "nasty smash," and he heaved a sigh of anticipation.

V

MUCH to Dr. Gibson's astonishment the week passed serenely; then a second, and a third. Gordon Reid went in town again to his office, and but for the unnatural whiteness of his features—which Dr. Gibson hazarded was not entirely due to his physical condition—and the loss of a few pounds, his appearance was much the same as usual.

Kit rarely left her little patient, whose devotion rapidly grew into passionate adoration, and concentrated all her energies upon restoring the child to health and strength. The progress at first was slow, so imperceptible that at the end of the third month Dr. Gibson acknowledged his despair of being able ever to place her on her feet. Kit asked for another week before he should give this decision to Mrs. Reid, and Dr. Gibson skeptically granted it. Then from that time Winnie's progress became so marked that Kit herself was astonished.

Early one evening the child fell into a deep sleep and Kit resolutely set

about to fashion the reply she should make to Beatrice's letter, which had so far remained unanswered. She detested herself for her irresolution, but had found it utterly impossible to bring herself to the decision of marrying Billy Henderson. The very thought maddened her. Her freedom had become a valuable, much appreciated acquisition.

She decided to begin her letter and defer the matter of Billy until the end. By that time she hoped to have reached a decision. And suddenly realizing how much she had demanded from Beatrice throughout their close friendship and how little, in Beatrice's eyes, she had been willing to give in return, she resolved to write as she had never written before—of vital matters closely touching herself. Beatrice's correspondence had ever been intimate, confidential, every line containing proof of her steadfast affection; and the writer had quite failed to realize that Kit's letters meant just as great an evidence of faith on her part, characteristically impersonal though they invariably turned out to be, for they were frequently written under the most difficult and trying circumstances.

In a softened, entirely novel mood she reached under the table for her portfolio, and assuring herself that Winnie was sleeping with a restfulness the child had not enjoyed for many painful weeks, she began to write. And as she wrote, the habit of stern repression was overridden by a wild temptation to open for the moment her surcharged heart to an ever sympathetic understanding.

Relief was instantaneous, acute; more than once hot tears blurred her vision. Self-pity? she wondered scornfully, but wrote steadfastly on. When the big clock in the hall announced the hour of twelve with ponderous, self-important strokes, she marveled incredulously at the flight of time. The subject of Billy had not yet been broached, but there would be time for that when her final decision had been reached.

She slipped the unfinished letter into

the portfolio, and placing a little silver bell on the table beside the bed, started downstairs to change a book. Winnie's nights were frequently wakeful and Kit was accustomed to read her to sleep, finding queer, unexpected books in the big library which pleased the child's elfish fancy.

On the threshold she stopped in abrupt dismay. Helen Reid was crouched on the floor before the fire, her arms outstretched on the big chair before her, her head bowed in an attitude of ungovernable despair. Beside her stood the big dog, motionless.

"You wanted to see me, Mrs. Trenor?" she asked, rising slowly to her feet and facing Kit with swiftly recovered self-control. The slender figure in the clinging black gown was drawn to its full height; the regal little head, exquisitely poised on the bare, white throat, was held erect. The features, if white, betrayed no hint of weeping. Kit was aware, as never before, of the imperious beauty of the woman before her. "You wanted me?" Mrs. Reid repeated. "Winifred is worse?"

"Winifred is sleeping as she has not slept for many weeks," Kit returned, swiftly entering the room and walking up to the big center table. "I understood you and Mr. Reid were out—I am sincerely sorry for my intrusion." She laid her book on the table and leaned forward impetuously, resolved to reach the heart below the stony mask of the other's white face. "Mrs. Reid, you are in trouble. Ah, forgive me, forgive me—but let me help you!"

Impelled by Kit's electric sympathy, Helen Reid turned and flung wide her hands with a bitter little laugh. "It is only the usual question of 'the other woman,'" she said, her reserve recklessly cast aside. "My husband's other wife."

After a pause, Kit spoke, swiftly determining on a course of action.

"I—knew her. She was in my class at Johns Hopkins." Her essentially truthful nature flinched at the prevarication, but her voice did not falter.

"Tell me," Helen demanded, "is she

living, this woman, whose place I have usurped?"

This unexpected attitude staggered Kit's conception of Gordon's second marriage. "I do not understand you. She is living, yes. But I do not think I understand you."

"When I married Gordon Reid," Helen answered deliberately, "I did not know he was already a married man. As I do not recognize divorce, the inference is obvious. We met in Paris, where I had joined my mother after four years of boarding school in a French convent—a training which perhaps explains my narrow views on the subject of divorce. I did not learn that Gordon had another wife living until we had been married four years. If it had not been for Winifred, I should undoubtedly have left him. I weighed the possibility, which I thought would nearly kill me; but I have since learned that grief does not kill." She turned away slowly and held out her hands to the leaping blaze. "I do not know why I tell you these things, except sometimes—perhaps only once in a lifetime—a woman is driven to speak of the things which burden her heart."

"Yes," said Kit, "I know." She recalled the letter she had been writing to Beatrice—a relentless exposure of the heart she had for years so zealously guarded. Rather curiously she realized that twenty-four hours earlier she would not have been in a position to comprehend Helen Reid's aphorism. "Yes," she said again, "I know."

"That was my first bitter awakening. My second came with the realization of how little I really understood Winifred, my own daughter. For several years the child has been practically a stranger to me." Kit swiftly recalled Gordon as a boy—reckless, lovable, inconsequent, demonstrative, but ever enigmatic, elusive. Winifred was a second edition of her father. "Then followed the knowledge that I was no longer essential to Gordon's happiness. It came to be an unusual thing for him to come home to dinner, and a still more unusual thing for him to consent to go out with me in the evening. Since

we moved here to Baltimore, two years ago, the thought has occurred to me that perhaps he cares more for the society of his other wife than he does for mine. There is no reason that I can see why she, too, should not be living in Baltimore. Gordon told me once—the only time he has ever spoken of her—that 'Kit' had always intoxicated him like sparkling Burgundy. Perhaps he still seeks the stimulation of her presence. I don't know." She turned again her haggard face toward Kit. "I think I should experience a feeling almost of happiness if I could think—be sure—that perhaps this unhappy woman—I don't know why I am so confident she is unhappy—had won another man's love."

"Should you?" demanded Kit suddenly. She had moved to the window and stood with her back to the room, one hand high above her head, grasping the dull red portière. "Should you? Why?"

"That if ever again I win Gordon's love I shall not feel I am attempting to steal what does not rightfully belong to me. Things might be infinitely happier for the three of us if— Oh, this is monstrous to talk to you like this! You were made for life's gladness, Mrs. Trenor. I think I never met a woman so vitally, joyously alive as you."

"Has it never occurred to you"—Kit's forehead was pressed against the icy window pane; her eyes rested unheedingly on the beauty of the snow-clad world glittering in the light of the big, round moon—"that those of us who are endowed with this capacity for joy possess in a like degree the capacity for suffering?" She drew a long breath. "It is the price we are forced to pay."

"No," said Helen. "It had never occurred to me. I have—bitterly, I confess—looked upon you as one of life's favorites."

"I am very often credited with belonging to that mythical company," Kit answered. She left the window and moved again to the table, speaking with deliberate intent. "And so was a classmate of mine, Kathleen Reid.

But as I was—fortunate enough to win her confidence, she once or twice opened her heart to me and so disclosed its latent bitterness. Because of this confidence I am now able to tell you that Kathleen—'Kit'—leaves in a very short time for Italy to marry William Henderson, the painter."

Kit's features were white and strained, but her eyes met Helen's glance with unwavering steadiness. For a long moment neither woman spoke.

It was this tableau which greeted Gordon Reid as he entered the room, and caused every trace of color slowly to leave his features.

"Why did you care to come home from the Burtons' so early?" he demanded of his wife with well assumed indifference, although keenly aware of the galvanism in the air, which he was confident originated from Kit's betrayal of their former relations. He flung his gloves on the table and faced her squarely, gathering all his reserve force to meet Helen's scorn. He determined to leave to her the initiative. "When I looked for you, you had already gone."

"I had not seen you the whole evening," Helen answered, withdrawing her eyes with difficulty from Kit's set face. "I concluded you had deposited me at the Burtons' and had then sought your own pleasure—elsewhere. We have been seen together so seldom lately that fortunately your negligence caused no extra comment."

Reid's eyes darkened with anger.

"You are pleased to speak in riddles," he answered curtly. "Burton, as you know, is just back from his hunting trip in Africa, and with his proverbial enthusiasm he was showing his specimens tonight to a few kindred spirits. If you thought I came home before you—"

"Why should I think you came home?" Helen demanded with a hard little laugh. "What is there here to attract you?"

But her attitude unconsciously softened as she recalled the fact that with Kathleen Reid on the other side of the

world, beyond Gordon's life irrevocably, there would be nothing to prevent her attempting to rebuild their own lives on a more substantial basis. She might even win again a place in his heart.

Reid did not see the eager light in her eyes as he involuntarily turned to Kit, silently demanding an explanation of the situation, which apparently was not as he had surmised. His own eyes lightened as they rested on Kit. How unapproachable, maddening, adorable she had always been! The other woman's beauty faded into insignificance in comparison with her brilliant coloring and daring personality.

What a fool he had been!

"Where else should I go?" his lips inadequately asked, his thoughts still centered upon Kit.

"Listen!" Kit broke in imperatively. She had desperately been seeking in her mind an excuse to break up the crisis, strained and on the verge of dangerous revelation as she knew it to be, and now a child's frightened call came as a distinct relief. All were conscious of the reaction from the surcharged atmosphere of a moment since as she went swiftly over to the table and picked up her book. "I think Winifred is calling for you, Mrs. Reid. Will you come up with me?"

VI

"GORDON! I thought you had gone in town to your office."

Kit, faultlessly habited, stopped abruptly on the threshold of the library. In her hand she held two letters—one of them the finished letter to Beatrice. The other was addressed to William Henderson, containing the information that she intended joining Beatrice three weeks from date at the Hotel du Vésuve in Naples. She slipped both in the capacious pocket of her habit.

Gordon Reid rose from the depths of the big chair and dropped his half-consumed cigarette into the grate. He smiled whimsically as he noted her astonishment at his own riding attire.

"I thought I'd beg again, Kit, for the privilege of accompanying you."

His mock humility angered her.

"I have told you repeatedly that I prefer to ride alone."

"You have. But Helen tells me you leave us tomorrow, and I fancied in my conceit that we might claim one last ride together. Browning's description of such a thing has always rather appealed to me, don't you know. Helen is in town this morning purchasing, I believe, a set of old maid cards which Winifred wishes to present to you as a parting gift in memory of the nerve racking games you two have played together. You've been jolly good to the youngster, Kit."

There was a touch of genuine feeling in his voice which disconcerted her.

"I shall never cease to reproach myself," she answered, "for having been the cause of the accident. I cannot be sufficiently thankful that she is regaining her strength. When she walked across the room today Dr. Gibson said it was only a question of time before she is herown vigorous little self again."

"I say, Kit"—he spoke irrelevantly and with a curious hesitation—"what-ever made you take to nursing?"

"I was obliged to 'take to' something," Kit answered, her clear eyes making no attempt to avoid his glance. "For a time I was at a loss to decide between Johns Hopkins and the Massachusetts General—the high entrance fees of both command a better class of nurses than in most hospitals. Having finally graduated from Johns Hopkins, it was only natural to begin practicing here in Baltimore. I should certainly have left, however, when I heard you were leaving New York after purchasing this 'magnificent country residence' if Dr. Gibson had not been supplying me with plenty of cases, which meant literally my bread and butter."

How calmly she said it, Reid thought. And how stunningly she held herself in the severe black habit! She was not beautiful, in the strict interpretation of the word, although men had invariably termed her so. What lent color to the illusion was the intense dramatic

play of expression on features of fascinating irregularity, the vividly forceful outlook of the dark eyes under the level characteristic brows, the unexpected sweetness to be watched for in her smile.

"But I assure you," the serene voice went on, "I should never have accepted you as a case had I guessed where Dr. Gibson was bringing me. When I recognized Dvorak I attempted to leave, but Dr. Gibson said you would die if I did. You are probably not aware"—she smiled as she flicked at her boot with her whip—"that by remaining I saved your life."

He shook his head with mock concern. "I grieve to state that I was in ignorance of that vitally important fact—for which, I presume, I should be profoundly grateful." The last words were added with a bitterness which once again made her dubious of her conversational footing. "Wouldn't it be a rare treat for our innumerable mutual friends if they should guess of your presence in my idyllic establishment? I fear Helen, however, would not accept the knowledge at its true dramatic value; she lacks your delightful sense of the humor of things. I rather thought last night that you had told her of the comedy going on under her very eyes." He looked at her keenly and marveled at the sudden wistfulness of her features.

"No," Kit answered, "I shall never tell Mrs. Reid." She flushed a little as she met his inquiring glance. "I could not well endure her scorn," she answered simply. "I am a coward, I suppose, but your wife is so singularly honest that she would have the most profound contempt for me in my false position here. You know that." With a complete change of manner she went on abruptly: "I want your word of honor, Gordon, before I leave this house, that you will for the rest of your existence be faithful to the woman whom you have asked to share your life. Helen Reid is a woman worthy of the very best and noblest devotion you have it in you to give her."

Reid turned to the fire and kicked

a log farther back in the flames. Then came the brief word, "Indeed!"

"I am going to thrash this out," Kit said quietly.

He faced her then with elevated brows.

"Go on," he returned, with laconic encouragement.

"Have you any great objection to telling me, Gordon, where you spend your evenings?"

Her syllables were clean cut, but failed in their effort to disconcert the steadiness of his gaze.

"Where?" He smiled inscrutably.

"I shall overlook the impertinence of your question and admit you to the bosom of my confidence. Most of my evenings are consumed, with myself for pleasurable company, in walking out from town. When I reach home I am usually tired enough to go to bed, and do so conscience free, as my very charming wife is not infrequently playing the society act in the city, getting back rarely before twelve or one o'clock. As Helen and I no longer share the same rooms, she never knows when I come in, if she happens to be home, and fancies me, I do not doubt, abroad until the wee small hours of the morning engaged in some not very commendable occupation."

Through half-closed lids Kit observed the clean cut features of the man before her, the vigorous force of his expression. His figure, though still a little wasted from his long illness, was erect and suggestive of much reserve strength. There was no trace of dissipation either in the clear pallor of his skin or in the brilliancy of his eyes.

He stood motionless before the big fire, watching in his turn the slender figure in the big chair and striving to gain mastery over his love for her, which he had successfully smothered during the intervening years when he had not seen her, but which now her mere tantalizing presence had caused to shoot into this sweeping, devouring flame which scorched his very soul.

"Then," said Kit, wondering how much probing he would take from her, but fully determined to play the sur-

geon for Helen's sake, "there is no other woman?"

"Yes," said Reid, with uncompromising directness. "You, Kit, are the other woman." He leaned negligently against the mantel and smiled.

Kit sprang to her feet and faced him in hot anger.

"To relieve your strangely awakened conscience, however," he went on in the same even tones, which were rendered emphatic by the undercurrent of strongly repressed passion, "I swear that with the exception of my love for you I have been faithful to Helen."

"With the exception of your love for me—that is faithful indeed!" Kit returned contemptuously. "And the worst of the whole thing is, you let her believe you an unmarried man."

She felt herself in danger of being swept off her feet if she should loose the floodgates of his ardor, but a characteristic sense of justice impelled her to fight to a finish.

"It must have afforded you much interest," Reid commented, "to compare notes with Helen. If you desire to learn the truth in this matter I am perfectly willing to tell you it never once occurred to me that Helen might be ignorant of my past history. Her mother knew it all and was quite willing to overlook everything because of my name and money." He laughed a little bitterly. "How was I to guess that the clear-eyed daughter she threw in my way was not of her own stamp?"

"So that was the way of it," Kit muttered, wringing the fingers of her black gauntlet.

"I married Helen," Reid went on deliberately, "wondering a little at the time why I did so, for your image was ever before me. When I learned of her inherent pureness and honesty I was impelled—God knows why—to tell her of my divorce. That marked the beginning of our estrangement. I have since learned that most people who are essentially good are essentially narrow as well. We need to have evil in our own lives to combat before we can meet the mixed good and evil in others

with any degree of comprehending sympathy. I confessed everything to Helen, and it was then that she failed me, recoiling from me as if I had been guilty of every vile sin known to man. Divorce to her meant disgrace unmitigated; and she had married a divorced man. Since then she has been suspicious of my every movement."

"I know why," said Kit. "She has been jealous of me. Don't look skeptical. It is all perfectly true. And can't you see things a bit from her point of view?"

"I have tried," Reid answered with convincing simplicity. "It's no use, Kit; we can't hit it off."

"But you must!" Kit cried in ringing accents. "You must! Make her trust in you again, as she trusted in you when she married you. That would be an aim worth living for, Gordon! I am made of sterner stuff than Helen, and yet you forcibly made me believe in the existence of a very lively earthly hell—"

She stopped, for Reid had leaped forward and seized her wrists in a grip of iron, his features distorted with agonized self-reproach.

"Good God, Kit, how you torture me! Don't you know there is not another woman like you in this whole wide world?" His grasp on her wrists tightened, a surging grief in his heart and eyes and voice. "Kit! Kit! You love me. Deny it if you dare!" He waited and his burning glance drew her resisting eyes to his. "Deny it!" he cried again with brutal triumph as she struggled in vain fury to free herself.

She felt herself in danger of being swept away by the sheer rugged force of his personality, but resolutely she struggled back to the channel she had marked out for herself.

"I do deny it," she declared, her voice seeming to her to come from a great distance and to count for nothing in stemming the resistless tide of his passion. "Let me go, Gordon! Let me go, I say! You are hurting me cruelly!"

Reid dropped her wrists, only to

gather her slender little figure into his arms.

"Deny it!" he cried for the third time, and kissed her roughly on the lips.

A sheet of white-hot anger veiled Kit's eyes, and inconsistently her heart beat madly in pride of his mastery. Why had he not wooed her in the beginning in this stormy fashion? She could have worshiped him, then, she knew, with the elemental savage let loose in his nature. It had been the inevitable veneer of the world-wise and world-weary man of the world which had gradually palled upon her, while his poisoned but ever carefully polished shafts of cruel innuendo had finally goaded her to seek her freedom.

White, but perfectly collected, she at length stood before him.

"Will you give me my whip?" she asked in tones ominously quiet. "And now I will thank you to move out of my way."

VII

Kir moved swiftly out onto the porch and down the steps where old Solomon held Mesrour. And because of the presence of Solomon she touched her foot lightly to Reid's proffered hand and so sprang into the saddle.

Reid, still clasping Mesrour's bridle, turned and ordered the old man to saddle Hotspur without delay.

"I prefer," said Kit, when Solomon had shambled away, "to ride alone."

"And I prefer," answered Reid, a strange exultation in his manner, "to accompany you. We are going to ride today to the end of the world, Kit, you and I. To the end of the world!"

"No," said Kit, "we are not."

"Do you think you can make me believe," he went on deliberately, "that you did not come to Oakhurst of your own free will and—knowledge? You may, of course, go when you will; but I shall go with you. We both know that it was meant to be so from the beginning."

"No," said Kit, "I don't know."

She was retaining with difficulty her studied quietness of manner, for Mesrour was impatient to be off and the strong hand on his bridle goaded him to fury. "You are probably not aware that I am going to marry Billy Henderson. You remember Billy? He—"

She paused abruptly, genuinely startled by the storm her words had aroused. A dull red flush of anger mounted to Reid's brow and then vanished slowly, leaving his features whiter than before and quivering with unchecked vehemence. He forcefully loosed the reins from her grasp and slipped them over Mesrour's head.

"Do you think," he demanded, "that I shall allow you to throw yourself away on Henderson? You, tailor-made and tailor-minded Kit, to marry a man who favors soft collars and flabby red ties!" He laughed harshly. "By heaven, no! And Henderson's genius, by the way, is rapidly evaporating in the fumes of whisky. Are you going to saddle yourself for the rest of your days with a drunken, besotted painter for a husband?"

Again that scorching sheet of anger, white-hot, blinded Kit's vision.

"Give me the reins," she commanded, her voice betraying no hint of the turmoil seething within her breast. Since an unhappy, trammelled childhood self-control had been second nature to her. "Give me the reins!" she said again imperiously.

"No!" answered Reid, speaking in low, triumphant tones and laying his free hand on the clenched black-gauntleted ones in her lap.

"Take care!" she muttered, strangling a sob of fury.

"Give me leave to take care of you," Reid went on, with his rare magnetic smile. It suddenly amused him to provoke Kit's temper yet further, as he would have teased a fiery kitten to do its worst; of his ultimate victory he entertained no doubt. "We shall ride away together, Kit, you and I. The whole world is before us from which to choose a dwelling place. By heaven, Kit, you *shall* belong to me!" The final words crashed out through set

teeth as Kit's sudden glance pierced his self-assurance like a bubble.

Then her rippling little laugh bewildered him. She gently freed her left hand from his grasp and ran it caressingly along Mesrour's arched neck. Leaning far forward on the side away from Reid, she deftly fumbled with the strap under the horse's throat, holding Reid's eyes meanwhile by the odd, mocking intensity of the light in her own.

He did not see that the strap finally swung loose.

"Will you let me go?"

"No."

It was over in a moment. Dazedly he stood with the useless reins dangling from his hand, an angry red welt gleaming across the whiteness of his cheek where Kit's whip had lashed him, while an infuriated, bridleless horse thundered down the drive, its graceful rider recovering herself magnificently as it crouched and cleared the tall closed gates at a bound.

By reason of a miraculous sure-footedness Mesrour was able to retain his balance even when the impetus of his spring sent him crashing halfway up the bank on the other side of the road. Then swerving sharply, horse and rider disappeared.

VIII

SULLEN green waves followed each other in writhing procession and found unexpected excuse to vent their pent up rage in swirling, hissing fury when the screws of the big ocean liner disturbed their ominous situation. The sky was an uncompromising, forbidding gray. At intervals a sea gull hovered motionless above the steamer before continuing its flight, as though to gain strength from the fact that other lives, however alien, could exist on that expanse of unutterable, throbbing loneliness.

The passengers, as well as the gulls, were affected by the same strange sense of desolation as, wrapped mummy-like in shawls and rugs, they yielded in ab-

ject misery to the slow, ponderous, but none the less convincing, roll of the steamer.

Kit Trenor's chair was a little apart from the others. Through half-closed lids she watched the solid wall of gray sky, cut into oblong blocks by the white bars of the railing, give place to the solid wall of green sea, segregated in the same manner. For several hours her thoughts had been running persistently in the groove of her life made by the past year, since the morning when Dr. Gibson's automobile had, with inconceivable forethought and rapidity, been placed across the road to bring Mesrour to a halt. The horse had reared in maddened, bewildered terror, had lost his balance and fallen heavily, pinning her beneath his weight.

The first three months after the accident, when her life had hung by a thread, Dr. Gibson had given her consecutive hours of his valuable time and an enormous measure of his colossal will power to induce the return of the wavering spirit to the twisted, pain-racked body. Even when all danger was past and her recovery assured, the physician continued his visits until the afternoon she abruptly begged him to stop. Time alone was needed to finish what his skill had so ably begun. It was characteristic of her to chafe under the sense of obligation his unflinching attentiveness had called forth.

Dr. Gibson laid down his hat, which he had taken up preparatory to departure, and placed his huge bulk in the chair by her bed, a most unusual occurrence with him. It was very quiet in the severe little room, and the soft breeze coming through the open window fanned into fragrance the great cluster of American Beauty roses which were a regular unwelcome gift from Gordon Reid. The physician's fingers, instead of fastening upon her wrist as they had so often done before, clasped her frail hand in a determined grip; his deep set eyes gazed steadily into hers from under the shaggy, overhanging brows. He emphatically pooh-poohed the notion of her indebt-

edness, telling her bluntly that she could cancel it at once by promising to marry him. Interpreting her stunned silence as acquiescence, he launched at once into the practical details for his pet scheme of a private sanitarium, which should be built with all the modern appurtenances of a first class hotel. Kitty should have charge of the training school. He knew very well that Kitty possessed rare executive ability; between them they would soon work up the proposed sanitarium to be the most successful in the world.

Kit had flung an emaciated arm across her eyes. He could not guess that tears of mortification and weak anger were forcing themselves between the tightly closed lids.

Not once had the question of love been brought to bear upon the proposition he was offering her. The thing was business from first to last.

It required the expenditure of Kit's entire little store of hard won strength to make the physician understand that her refusal to marry him was unconditional. Blinded by his ingrained egotism and by rosy dreams of the success of his scheme, he pressed his suit again and again.

Finally convinced of the sincerity of her rejection, he left her with an explosive outburst of temper.

At this inopportune moment Gordon Reid begged admittance, and in sudden impatience to have the inevitable over and done with, she sent word to him to come up.

He stopped short on the threshold of the room in genuine dismay at the emaciation and pallor of Kit's face, accentuated by the masses of dark hair framing it in two heavy braids; at the light of suffering in the feverish, restless eyes, and at the bitter compression of her lips.

Strangely ill at ease, he took the chair Dr. Gibson had just vacated, and with uncharacteristic tactlessness plunged at once into the news that he had had Mesrour shot, news which she had heard long ago from Dr. Gibson and which she had considered a needless, cruel sacrifice. Then his manner

became inexpressibly gentle as he told her of his grief over the unhappiness he had caused her. His hands clasped between his knees, he leaned forward, and with his old winning smile pleaded forgiveness. Dr. Gibson had said she could now receive visitors. Both Helen and Winnie, Gordon told her, were anxious to see her and to do all in their power to help her through her convalescence. Winnie, he added, had been inconsolable.

The half-hour which followed proved a difficult one for them both. He finally left her, purified by the searing flames of her scorn and just condemnation, and humbled by the promise he had given her to devote himself wholeheartedly to the task of regaining Helen's confidence and—if so it might be—love. In that way only, Kit had told him, could he make reparation for the wrong he had done them both. She had let him see that she believed his word, and he did not question the force of the influence and inspiration that belief—after the unworthy way in which he had treated her—was going to be to him. From the depths of his heart he valued it and was grateful.

Once more alone, Kit realized with scornful bitterness that he had never really loved her. She had stimulated his intellect and whetted his vanity, but his heart she had never reached. She wondered with a little dull ache in her own heart whether any man would ever love her because of the vital, simple truth that he could not help himself.

She was wondering the same thing today as the roll of the steamer showed her the alternate walls of gray and green and unconsciously the wistfulness of her heart was reflected in her eyes.

It was the bigness of these eyes and the extraordinary length and blackness of their lashes which attracted the attention of an indefatigable individual pacing the deck with commendable and—in the opinion of the disconsolate row of mummies—brutally cheerful energy, in spite of the inevitable difficulties such a course presented. He completed the circuit of the deck many times for no

other reason than to have an opportunity of seeing again the interesting face of the woman who had captured his imagination.

He gave a laugh of satisfaction when a truant breeze caught up a sheet of the letter she had been writing and mischievously deposited it at his feet. It offered him an excuse to approach her, and seeing in her eyes a frank longing to be entertained, he dropped into the vacant chair by her side.

IX

"YOUR energy fills me with wonder and admiration and not a little self-contempt," Kit began, folding up the closely written sheets of her letter and slipping them into her portfolio as a convincing proof that his presence was a welcome one. On nearer view his unusual face tempted her to probe the meaning of its deep lines, strong almost to sternness until criss-crossed by the smaller lines when he smiled, creating a network of unexpected tenderness. People, as a whole and individually, were beginning to regain their old resistless fascination in Kit's eyes, and this man interested her singularly. She found herself unable to place his age or nationality or possible occupation, three things she invariably guessed at, usually with unerring instinct, when meeting strangers; and her inability in this case piqued her pride and curiosity. He might have been any age from forty to sixty; his red-brown hair was sprinkled plentifully with gray, a mark of age belied by the startling keenness of his small blue eyes. He spoke with a slight accent, but his fluency of English and his mastery of idioms gave no excuse for an involuntary word now and again in his own language, whatever that might be. She was tempted to think his calling belonged to the sea, because of the healthy vigor of his florid skin and the ease with which he had met the demands of the seesawing deck when taking his promenade. But as she had never seen him conversing with the

captain or with any of the officers, she put this idea aside as improbable.

"Why self-contempt?" he queried a little curiously. "That is a word I have not heard many American women use in connection with themselves; they are apt to fly to the opposite extreme."

"I have not been out of my chair this whole blessed morning," Kit explained, "and I cannot plead *mal-de-mer* as an excuse for laziness. I see you, too, are immune from that universal complaint."

"I should hope to be that," he answered, a sparkle of amusement in his eyes, "with over thirty years of life on the sea to my credit." Kit experienced a feeling of pride for her perspicuity. "I was only genuinely miserable once," he went on, turning in his chair the better to watch Kit's interested face, "and that was on my first voyage—on a sailing vessel. It was rough—unspeakably rough to a recently converted landlubber—and I was ordered aloft. But if I had thought the ship rocking below, I found the rigging describing complete half-circles from horizon to horizon with an appalling industry and dispatch which made me hold on tight, shut my eyes and pray fervently that the next time I came near the water I would tumble off and drop to the very bottom of the sea and never come up again."

"You must have had some interesting experiences," Kit insinuated. She was in the mood for stories.

"I have, of course," he returned gravely. "What man of the sea has not? But this trip is as interesting, in the light of a new experience, as any I have ever taken."

"This one?" Kit exclaimed, not attempting to conceal her surprise. "Not a thing has happened to my knowledge since we left America two days ago. We haven't passed a ship and not even a porpoise has shown himself. I had hoped for a whale—but I suppose that expectation is far too ambitious. The passengers are interesting—yes. Passengers are always interesting. I am really dying with curiosity to find out

whether the musician at your table—the man with the straight up light hair and peculiar eyes—sings or plays. I am confident he does one or the other well, for he seems to have an enormous amount of surplus energy bottled up within him, and his face is clever. I have been watching him. Perhaps he is a violinist?"

"He neither sings nor plays. I am genuinely sorry to disprove your theory, but the man is an architect."

"Oh!" said Kit with gay disappointment.

"He is interesting, peculiarly interesting. He has undeniable genius, but absolutely no practical common sense to back it. I was talking to him last night. Another worth-while fellow is the Australian who sits at your table. He is a little man with big ideas and seems to be successful in carrying them out. He is an inventor. To look at him you would never dream of the really fine brain there is in that insignificant-looking head. The Australians are a progressive people—far more so than their brothers in England."

"Well, laying aside the unobliging absence of porpoises and ships, is it the passengers alone that are making this voyage apparently a red letter event to you? I am curious to know if anything exciting is happening below, that little world unto itself, into which the passengers get so few glimpses."

"No, I believe not. It merely seems a strange anomaly for a sea captain to be a passenger on another captain's ship. I am enjoying the experience hugely. I have never booked as passenger before."

"I wonder if you can be the 'Norwegian captain' Mrs. Harvey was speaking of last night? She had everybody marvelously excited about you."

"I am duly flattered! The ladies at one end of the deck and the men in the smoking room at the other discussing each other 'for dear life,' as you Americans phrase it—quite a picture, upon my word! It's a wonder anybody has a shred of reputation left at the end of an ocean voyage, for it goes

without saying that we have to fall back upon each other for topics of conversation during this painful dearth of whales and porpoises. What was Mrs. Harvey good enough to say about me?"

"She said you did not like American women, and the saloon immediately was in an uproar."

"That is perfectly true," the captain answered with blunt honesty.

"But I protest!" Kit cried, the light of battle appearing in her eye. "We are not admired by the English and several other nations—as nations—because of the hordes of tourists we continually pour into their countries, uncultured people, mostly, who talk in loud voices and demand unreasonable things. Foreigners continually take them to be typical Americans of the better class, and do not consider the youngness of our nation, which needs time to polish off its rough edges. Take these same people in their own homes and they show off to infinitely better advantage—a little unpolished, perhaps, sometimes, but thoroughly kind hearted and hospitable and honest. Surely you, who have traveled so widely, must concede this."

"Undoubtedly. But I was not referring to Americans abroad. I was referring to Americans at home and to this frantic life of the brain and not of the heart which so many of you lead. Cleverness is the cry of the age, and to be clever—or to be deemed clever—you women are ruthlessly cutting hearts out of your scheme of life altogether and don't even realize that they bleed during the painful process."

"Then you admit that we *are* clever?" Kit demanded, still a little uncertain of her ground and determined to investigate the enemy's strength and weakness from all possible viewpoints before summoning her own resources to crush this astounding and sweeping condemnation of her countrywomen.

"Superficially clever, yes," returned her adversary, "and admirably clever in concealing the fact that your cleverness is only skin deep."

"Good heavens!" Kit cried, as the

bugle sounded for lunch and the captain unswathed her from her many rugs and helped her to her feet. "I see my duty clearly before me. For the remainder of this trip I shall undertake to refute your statements, one by one, and disprove your alarming and uncomplimentary theories."

"I am open to conviction," the captain answered with his sudden gentle smile as he looked down into Kit's flashing eyes. He found her undeniably fascinating. "And if the trip is not long enough, come on my ship to Australia. I have been ill in America for several months, but I join the *Adventurer* at Liverpool and take her to Australia the end of next week."

"I shall be tempted to book on the *Adventurer* if I have not converted the *Adventurer's* captain before we reach Liverpool," Kit returned with spirit.

There was an uncompromising honesty about both combatants which drew their sympathies strongly together in spite of aggressive differences.

"You are stiff," the captain announced, taking her arm with a deferential courtesy which made Mrs. Harvey gasp with curiosity and amazement as she met them at the head of the stairs. "One is colder than one realizes after sitting still for a time."

"I am not cold—I am lame," Kit answered with characteristic directness.

X

THE converting of the Norwegian captain's beliefs went on industriously, to the thorough mystification and exasperation of Mrs. Harvey and her satellites. The captain was far and away the most presentable man among the passengers, and why he should choose—when his unflattering opinions concerning American women were so well known and widely discussed—to spend most of his time with snobbish little Mrs. Trenor proved to be beyond Mrs. Harvey's rather shallow comprehension.

Kit was not popular on board, a fact which gave her peculiar satisfaction.

From the first she had met the gushing overtures of Mrs. Harvey with a detached politeness which greatly discomfited the latter.

"What *can* you see in her?" Mrs. Harvey demanded of the Norwegian captain across the table one day. "I should have given you credit for better taste." She looked at him archly with her head on one side, until he began to tremble for the safety of the tiers of puffs—which had mysteriously sprung into existence with the advent of calm weather—rising to an alarming height above the coarsely pretty face.

He gravely extracted a bone from the fish on his fork, and then gave her his undivided attention.

"What do I see in Mrs. Trenor?" he repeated. "A heart. That is, I think I do. I am not sure, but I think I do. I am going to find out. May I trouble you for the salt, please?"

"I am going to find out," he repeated, as he deftly tucked Kit's rugs about her later in the afternoon.

"Find out what, may I ask?"

"If you possess a heart. I think you do. Am I wrong?"

To his surprise she did not answer at once, and when he turned to her an expression of inscrutable weariness in her eyes startled him. Her face seemed to him older and, of a sudden, very tired.

"I don't know," she said. "I don't—know." She was thinking of Dr. Gibson's accusation to her long ago. Her gaze wandered out to sea and he saw for the first time the bitter discontent of her lips in repose. She roused herself with an effort and turned back to him. "What time do we reach Liverpool tomorrow?"

"We are supposed to get in by noon," he answered, lowering himself into his chair, which he had had moved next to hers. "The *Adventurer* sails in exactly a week. You had better come along. There are still one or two points of difference for us to settle, although I acknowledge your several masterly victories. Can't I induce you to sail with us?"

"I am afraid not. I am bound in another direction. I am glad for Cap-

tain Moody that his boat will be in in time for Christmas dinner," she went on. "He was dubious about being able to land us tomorrow at all when the fog kept us back so yesterday. He was really quite funny about it. The chief steward, I understand, had told him that there is only one turkey left on board, and Captain Moody said the tables would have to draw for it."

"Captain Moody will eat his Christmas dinner at home in Liverpool tomorrow without a doubt. He's a lucky dog."

The last remark was added with such apparent afterthought that Kit was tempted to ask, "Why?"

"Why? Because he has such a delightful home of his own. His wife is charming and his children are all that children ought to be. Doesn't that make him a lucky dog? I tell you people with homes are all lucky dogs. I ran away from mine when I was sixteen and I have never had one since."

"There is a saying," said Kit, "that a sailor has a wife in every port."

"It does not apply to me," the captain answered, his clean, honest glance meeting her eyes squarely.

"Surely there are plenty of women in the world besides Americans," she commented flippantly. A spirit of unrest had seized upon her. She longed to be alone, and yet dreaded the company of her own thoughts.

"There are not many who would meet all the requirements I demand in a wife," the captain made answer with candid egotism, his keen blue eyes searching Kit's face. "Do you care to go out on the bow?"

The question was an appeal to which her restlessness urged her to respond.

They made their way down the steep little steps to the deck below, and, skirting the huge anchor machinery, found themselves, to the captain's visible relief, the only occupants of the favorite haunt on the ship.

It had been a blue day. The sky was blue—the calm sea a reflection. Now, with the setting sun, soft purple hues crept into the color scheme and tinged all things with mystery. A

solitary white gull hovered for the moment motionless above the ship.

Kit leaned against the broad rail and turned a little to face squarely the wind, glad of the excuse which kept her features away from the captain's scrutiny.

"It has been a very fine day."

The commonplace jarred upon her.

"Yes," she answered without enthusiasm, although her whole soul was quivering in response to the hallowed beauty about them.

"Do you remember, Mrs. Trenor, what I said to you on the upper deck?"

"We were speaking of hearts and Christmas dinners, I think," Kit returned, a little amused by her inexplicable desire to be disagreeable.

"And I also told you that the woman whom I should ask to become my wife would need to be endowed with many virtues—so many that all my life I have despaired of finding them embodied in one individual."

"I believe you did say something of the kind."

Her eyes followed the gliding flight of the gull as the bird hovered for a moment over the particular spot of its choice and then with delicate ease alighted on the water and folded its wings contentedly.

"Mrs. Trenor"—the captain drew a step nearer, but Kit's head was still turned so that he was unable to catch a glimpse of her face—"Mrs. Trenor, will you marry me?"

For a moment Kit did not speak. When she turned to him he was startled by the burning eyes in the thin, drawn face.

"I appreciate the implied compliment, Captain," she said. "But no, I cannot marry you."

"Don't say that until you have heard me further!" he cried impetuously. "I am not such an old duffer—fifty-four is not old!—and I have private means outside of my pay as captain which will enable me to keep you in comfort—even in modest luxury. You shall have the very best that money can buy."

"But not the best that love can

give," Kit's heart made answer passionately.

"As an American woman," she said aloud, "I appreciate even more fully the honor you do me; but it is out of the question." The man was commendably honest, she told herself, to make no false pretenses of a love he did not feel, and for this she respected him. It was a mutual bargain, pure and simple, that he was proposing. He was to provide the wherewithal for the home he apparently longed for, and she was to see to the Christmas dinners and supply the home atmosphere.

"May I ask why?" he said gently. "I think I have the right to that."

"For one thing, I lack the most essential of the qualities you, I understand, are looking for in your wife. You see, you have described this mythical creature to me so fully that I feel as if I know her thoroughly, even on so short an acquaintance."

"You lack none of the qualities," the captain returned with grave earnestness. She was becoming more and more necessary to his happiness now that he felt she was in danger of slipping away from him.

"I do. I lack a heart."

"A heart!" He laughed incredulously. "You! Why, little woman, you are all heart!"

In spite of the familiarity Kit liked him at that moment better than she had ever done before. Genuine feeling had for once cracked the veneer of his egotism, and in his eyes she detected a spirit of loneliness which might have been the reflection from her own lonely heart.

"It is out of the question, Captain," she said briefly. "Please understand that as final—and please leave me."

For a moment he remained motionless, then reading in her eyes the positiveness of the verdict he had refused to accept from her lips, he lifted his cap with the deferential courtesy which invariably marked his manner and went away.

"He is really hungering for a home," Kit speculated, with a sudden stab of

sympathy. "After a life of wandering I can understand how desperately a hearth of his own would appeal to him. But is there in the world, I wonder, such a thing as love? Gordon's was purely selfish love for the stimulating companionship I could give him. Then there was Billy, who thought he loved me, but who was really only supremely grateful to me for waking his genius. It would be vastly easy for Billy to mistake gratitude for love, and with his artistic temperament I can readily fancy the melancholy pleasure he has derived from my unrequiting affection. Dr. Gibson desired my wifely services for the benefit of his sanitarium, and the Norwegian captain would fain have a home. I want to be loved for myself," she whispered with sudden passion as the sun dropped wistfully out of sight over the edge of the horizon and the purple shadows hugged the ship more closely. "God, I want to be loved!"

XI

KIT stood in the dark little hallway, five flights up, trembling from the exertion of her climb, and waited to recover her breath before knocking at the door on which was tacked a torn card announcing the name of William Henderson. Her heart was beating painfully, not with any doubt of the reception she would be given—Beatrice's letter and Billy's own words had put aside any question in that direction—but because she had seen fit to come unannounced. She wondered how his welcome would manifest itself. She was confident he must have answered her letter of a year ago; but during the long months when she had hovered on the brink of death her mail had accumulated unopened and unattended, and several letters, she learned later, had gone astray. Probably Billy's had been numbered among those which had not found her.

And suppose he had not heard from her for a year? A year, in Billy's eyes,

after her divorce, had been a short time to wait. He had begged the privilege of coming back to her, then, in a year's time, confident that her feelings for him would undergo a change when she had recovered herself and regained a normal view of things. He had said that a year was a short time to wait—with happiness at the end of it. Peremptorily she had forbidden him to return.

Now she was coming to him. Gordon, she knew, still kept up a desultory correspondence with him. From Gordon he must have heard all about her accident, which would satisfactorily explain her long silence.

She knocked on the door and waited tensely while a shuffling step approached on the inside and a hand fumbled with the knob. Resolutely she refused to let herself think that both the shuffling and the fumbling were characteristic of Billy.

The door opened and a young man—not much more than a boy—gazed at her with sudden startled wonder. He hastily took a pipe from his mouth, flushing uncomfortably.

"Isn't this Mr. Henderson's studio?"

"Yes," the boy answered. He backed nervously away from the door to allow her to enter. "But—I'm awfully sorry—Mr. Henderson isn't here. He left Paris two months ago."

Kit's disappointment was keen, but she smiled brightly upon the dazzled youth—whose quick artistic appreciation had noted the possibilities in her unusual features and itched to transfer them to canvas before she should escape him—and turned to go. In the doorway she hesitated.

"You probably know his address. May I have it? Or perhaps he is coming back soon?"

"I'm sorry, but I haven't any idea when he is coming back. He's at Nice now, at the Hotel Beau Rivage. Been there for nearly two months. He went to join some English friends of his—awful swells—Lord and Lady Alderhurst." He rolled the names glibly and pleasurably from his tongue. "Lady Alderhurst used to come often

to the studio and Lord Alderhurst sometimes came with her. She's a stunner." The boy rattled on, evidently deeply proud of his friend's friends, and anxious to show up Billy in the best light possible. "He painted her portrait, you know. It's on exhibition now. The critics rave about it. He—he's great, isn't he?"

He turned to her with a sudden passionate appeal for corroboration, and Kit realized that his pride in and evident love for Billy was no mere hero worship. His face, astonishingly ugly and astonishingly honest, quivering continually with every shade of fleeting emotion which he made no attempt to mask, attracted her strongly. He was awkward and self-conscious and abrupt; but back of all there was genius. Of this Kit was confident. An individual with a head like that could not but be a genius of some kind, she argued, with an illogical but instinctive accuracy.

"Have you known him long?" she asked.

"For a year or more. He picked me up in Rome, out of the gutter, practically, and is making a genius of me, he says." The boy laughed with shamefaced pride. The interest on Kit's face was genuine and he went on. "He said he would never be content until he did for somebody else what somebody did for him. That sounds mixed up," he added apologetically, "but Henderson is forever telling me that I am far from remarkable for my lucidity."

"Did somebody pick him out of the gutter?" Kit could not refrain from asking.

"Out of the gutter of despondency and sloth, he says. Of course that's figurative, and I don't know exactly what he means, for I haven't known him for so very long, you see, and he never talks much about himself. I don't know who rescued him or who discovered his genius; but he seems to be no end grateful, and says he has to pay back his debt to somebody else since he can't ever hope to pay it back to the right person. I happened

along in time to be the somebody else—that's all."

He finished simply, but the light in his eyes completed the little story as no words could have done.

"And you live here with him?"

Kit looked swiftly about the room. It was a typical studio, with nothing remarkable about it. But she could gather the impression of what it all meant to the boy when he laughed with passionate happiness.

"Yes, I live here with him. He—he's great. He really is. I'd—I'd give anything in the world to make him happy."

"Isn't he happy?"

"He has never said he isn't. But he drank, you know."

"Yes," said Kit gently.

"Then all of a sudden he stopped and wouldn't touch another drop. This was a little while after he came back from Italy, where he had been traveling with the Alderhursts. I don't know what made him give it up—I had done my levellest with him and had failed completely. I rather fancy it was Nathalie."

"Who," asked Kit, with a sudden tightening of her throat, "is Nathalie?"

"A French model he had. But I don't know, positively, whether she had anything to do with it. I only know that he was unhappier than ever those weeks and worked like the devil—worked himself thin. Even his friends could hardly recognize him." There was affectionate anxiety in the boy's voice. "About two months ago he went to Nice, and I've had only one postal from him since he's been away, and that was to tell me to be sure and stay on here. I don't like to do it, though, for Henderson won't let me pay him a cent for rent." He shoved his hands deep in his pockets and kicked at the foot of an easel in an agony of embarrassment. Then he looked at the clock. "Oh, I say, you know, I had no idea it was so late! Here I've been rambling on and haven't even offered you a chair! I've got to go out, but please sit down and make yourself at home. I sha'n't be

gone half an hour, and then I'll come back and make you a cup of tea!" He laughed with delighted enthusiasm as he shoved the easel out of the way and pushed the only big chair in the room toward Kit. "Please stay—do!"

"I'll stay," Kit answered gaily. Her back had begun to hurt her cruelly after the steep climb up the stairs and she felt unequal at the moment to further exertion. "Your invitation is too enticing to resist."

After the boy had gone she realized the bewilderment of her mind from the glimpses he had given her of an absolutely unfamiliar Billy—Billy, possessing sufficient energy to "work like the devil," and Billy, the philanthropist, who was "making" this boy. What was the meaning of it all? And what was the meaning of this long absence now? Was he working there at Nice, that he should desert his studio for such a length of time?

So he had given up drinking—probably because of the efforts of Nathalie! Did she love him, Kit wondered, this Nathalie? And what was she like? Perhaps that was Nathalie on the canvas in the corner.

She rose and turned the picture toward the light and found herself gazing into a face of singular intensity and amazing beauty. The somber dark eyes looked back into hers with uncompromising directness and with a passionate appeal in their depths—for what? Kit wondered. Cloudy masses of dark hair, caught in a simple knot at the nape of the neck, and the faultless oval of a stormy, brooding face with incomparable features—and that was all, with the exception of a scarf of some kind suggested over the shoulders. Crude and unfinished as she knew it to be, the tense life in the thing imprisoned Kit's attention and feverishly stirred her imagination.

XII

Kit was tempted to explore yet further among the canvases leaning in disorder, sometimes five and six deep,

against the walls. Big and little, she brought them to the light, and more than once was forced to blow off the accumulated dust of years before the true richness of their coloring was revealed in all its matchless beauty. Most of them were studies of Nathalie. Kit hesitated no longer in recognizing Nathalie as the girl with the sorrowful eyes and sensitive, impulsive, generous mouth. Such a character as the features gave key to would be able to wield enormous sway over individuals coming in touch with it; and Billy in the old days had never been remarkable for force to withstand any strong influence—whether for good or evil. That Nathalie's inspiration had been for good was unalterably proven.

With increasing wonder she laid another canvas for inspection on the easel, moving the full length study of a Spanish dancer with brilliant, challenging eyes, mocking lips and costume of riotous hues, and replacing it with the head of a Madonna. As both were drawn from Nathalie, the contrast was staggering in its unexpected completeness. Simplicity was the keynote of the latter, and the force and the beauty of it brought a hurtful tightening to Kit's throat. The wistful, pitying tenderness of the exquisite features foretold in their capacity for pain the depth of the suffering which would come to the Mother on Mount Calvary. The downcast eyes and tremulous mouth showered love unutterable on the divine Child Kit readily pictured lying in closely enfolding arms. The whole portrayal was mother love personified in a type of beauty rarely equaled—a beauty defined more by the visible inspiration of a sublime spirit than by the mere regularity of faultless features. The dark hair was parted simply, exposing the thoughtful forehead, and was covered by a filmy veil which did not wholly conceal the soft, rippling waves.

Kit gazed at the picture, absorbed, and the wild hungering ache it brought to her heart filled her eyes with scalding, unwonted tears.

The twilight deepened; but it seemed

to Kit that the beautiful sorrowing face stood out only the more distinctly from its framework of gray shadow.

"Did you ever see anything like it?"

The words were commonplace, but the throbbing emotion in the boy's voice found an echo in Kit's surcharged heart.

He had come in unnoticed, and now softly crossed the room to her side. His hands were shoved into his pockets; his ugly face was as wistful as her own.

"No," said Kit. The simple monosyllable, with its genuine inflection, satisfied him.

"That surely is as great as the greatest of them," the boy went on reverently. His self-consciousness had left him and Kit found him unexpectedly lovable. She knew now why William Henderson had picked him out to make a genius of him. He was a worthy disciple. "I can imagine what would happen if Henderson would only consent to exhibit it."

"Hasn't he?" Kit demanded. "That surely is as great a thing as he has ever done."

"He won't exhibit it until he has painted the child, and he has hunted for two years for a model to satisfy him. I don't know whether he has given up the search now or not. He hasn't said anything about it lately, and to my certain knowledge hasn't touched the picture for a year."

Kit turned, a little astonished. "That is strange, for it was far less dusty than many of the others. I fancied he must have finished it recently."

In the gathering dusk she could not see a dull red flush mount the boy's cheeks to the very roots of his hair.

"I suppose I am responsible for that," he said uncomfortably. "I—I'm rather fond of it, you know."

"Yes?" insinuated Kit softly, with her ever ready vital sympathy which moved the boy to lay bare his heart.

"You see, when I was a little beggar," he went on shyly, "I was extremely awkward and painfully—oh, agonizingly—bashful, and not a little inclined to be peppery tempered."

Kit nodded. "I understand perfectly. Go on."

"And then my ugliness made me, I suppose, more sensitive than was sensible. This ugliness was a constant thorn in my grandmother's side, for my mother—so she told me—was a very beautiful woman, and my affliction—she called it that—came entirely from my father, whom she cordially hated for having persuaded my mother to marry her against her wishes." He paused and looked at the picture thoughtfully. "I always envied little boys with mothers."

"Was she—dead?" Kit asked gently.

"No. When I was a year old she ran away with her Italian singing master. It was not until later that I realized the lack of the mother love I had a right to expect from her, and my supersensitiveness made me feel its loss the more keenly, for I had learned from other boys that mothers, as a rule, understand things without the formality of being told. This rather appealed to me. From a tiny shaver I had felt my grandmother's harshness and my father's indifference acutely. I longed passionately to be understood."

"Yes," said Kit again. "Go on."

She slipped into the big chair, and the boy was more than ever aware of the comfort of her interest.

"One day there came to us word from my mother in Rome that she was practically destitute and wildly unhappy. The Italian had deserted her. I heard my father discussing the thing with my grandmother, and in the end I heard her shrill voice cursing him because he refused to take her back. I was fourteen then, and I began to lay wild, boyish, unpractical plans to go to my mother in my father's stead. I had come to worship, you see, the image of an ideal mother, and I did not doubt that I should find her and make her happy. Three years later my father's death gave me money. He was peculiar in many ways, and, not believing in banks, had stored his all in a certain box which I knew well and which I unhesitatingly took, for the money now belonged to me. I set off in hot-

headed haste for Rome. I could not find my mother, and the money was soon gone. I was in desperate straits indeed when Henderson found me and transplanted me into this unbelievably happy life. But before he brought me here he worked with his usual level-headedness on a meager clue I had been able to pick up, and following it all the way to Milan ascertained that my mother was dead. And now perhaps you can understand why I think so much of this picture. I watched it grow from the beginning, and saw that all comprehending mother love developing under his tenderly skilful brushes. Now the picture never fails to still the bitterness when my life and thoughts occasionally get a topsyturvy fit."

"Yes," said Kit. The picture appealed peculiarly to the mother in her as well as to the motherless boy. She was thinking of her own child, who had lived only long enough to pierce the stillness of the big room with a tired little cry. For two days she had loved that beautiful bit of inanimate clay with a rebellious passion which terrified her. Never since had her soul been stirred to such tragic depths; but her habitual reserve and self-control had successfully concealed the wound made by the death of her infant son, and many people other than Dr. Gibson were wont to call her heartless.

"Is it a good likeness of Nathalie?" she asked, as the boy paused. "That is Nathalie, is it not?"

"Yes—and the picture is a wonderfully true likeness. Nathalie could make the fortune, I should think, of any artist. Dozens tried to get her away from Henderson after he had discovered her possibilities. They cursed their insane stupidity for not having had sense enough to take her before Henderson did. You see, she drove a hack, and there are so few women cabbies in Paris that they are more or less conspicuous. It took Henderson, however, to see beyond the unbecoming stiff hat and clumsy coat. He stopped her in the middle of the Champs Elysées one day, and although

she had an irate little old lady in the carriage behind her, who was poking her determinedly in the ribs with the point of a parasol, he wouldn't let her move on until he had extracted a promise that she would stop some day at his studio. She came that very evening. But," he went on, with a sudden change of manner, "I have bored you long enough with our affairs. I sold a picture yesterday and you've got to help me celebrate! In this bag are the most delicious cakes you have ever tasted, and I'll show you how I make tea." He laughed boyishly as he lifted his coat and hat from the table where he had deposited them when he first came in, and struck a match.

XIII

"LORD and Lady Alderhurst have motored to Monte Carlo for over Sunday. They left this morning. Yes, madam, we can give you a large front room on the third floor, overlooking the sea, of course. Will you register here, please?"

He pushed the book toward Kit and with a flourish extracted a large key from the case on the desk.

"Mr. Henderson is here, too, I understand," said Kit as she signed her name.

"Yes, madam. He has been here—for—I should say—six or seven weeks. He left the hotel just about two minutes ago."

"Which way did he go?"

"He turned to the right, I think. You will probably find him. He goes out every evening for a smoke, but never very far away from the house. Wait just a moment, please," he added, as he glanced at the name on the register; "I think there is a letter here for you. The mail usually arrives on a train which comes from Paris by a more direct route than yours and gets here two hours earlier."

"Send my things to my room. I sha'n't go up just yet."

In spite of the lateness of the hour and the fatigue of a long day's journey,

Kit left the hotel at once. There was no necessity to put off for another night the express object which had brought her from America to Paris and then to the Riviera.

Before her stretched the Mediterranean, shimmering softly under the radiance of a full moon and discharging its miniature breakers on the pebbly beach with musical crashes of sound. The bay, its shallow, sweeping curve outlined with twinkling lights and, in nearer view, with tall, stately palm trees; the white fronts of the houses; the brilliantly lighted Casino on a pavilion jutting out into the sea, with its well dressed people, laughter and music, created in Kit, perhaps because of her weary, tensely strung nerves, a feeling of queer unreality.

She walked across the street, realizing keenly that she was very tired.

Turning to the right, she made her way far past the Casino until its gaiety reached her only as a musical echo. As there was no sign of Billy she sat down on a bench, realizing that her walk had brought her much farther than she intended. The distance to be traversed back to the hotel loomed ominously before her.

She looked at her watch. It was nine o'clock.

She leaned back and closed her eyes. There was no necessity to return just then.

A man's firm tread echoing on the stone pavement was the only sound to reach her, except the crashing of the baby waves. Her active mind began at once to conjecture as to the man's possible appearance and characteristics. His step expressed both energy and determination.

The step halted. Abruptly she opened her eyes and found the individual directly in front of her leaning against the railing as he gazed steadfastly out to sea. He was tall and well knit, and the purposeful strength in the square shoulders filled her with a sense of delight which soon became intermingled with an odd sense of familiarity. This could not be Billy! Billy had been tall, but almost stout; his clothes

had hung upon him with the haphazard fit of garments on a scarecrow; his shoulders had slouched. This Billy! Kit began to long feverishly for a glimpse of his face.

He turned his head just then in the direction of the Casino, whence had come a sudden loud burst of music, and her heart thumped madly—hurtingly.

It was Billy—but what a changed Billy!

In the brilliant white moonlight she saw that his face was thin to leanness. The profile was uncompromisingly stern; the big mouth, before so loose and wavering, was harshly compressed. This was a *man*, she exulted fiercely—no idle, forceless dreamer, but a man with a man's brute strength visibly held in leash by a reasoning intellect of rare power. This was Billy, whose bold, brilliant work was taking the world by storm after creating a new school of both form and color which hordes of satellites strove with frantic vainness to follow. This was Billy, whose weakness she had once scorned, whose craven burial of the talents the Lord had given him had been beneath her contempt. His love, too, she remembered now, she had laughed at—laughed at, although her coming had been made possible by the faithfulness of that love! A flood of hot shame rushed over her for her blindness and injustice. Might she not have known that the fire of genius would burn away the dross and develop the best?

She felt herself swept off her feet when she came to contemplate the resistless force which would belong to the love of this man, and in her own heart was kindled a galvanic spark of some new, torturing, provocative emotion which she did not attempt to analyze. The thought of yielding to his protective strength brought with it no shame or pain, but rather a breathless joy. To be taken care of suddenly seemed to Kit, for the first time in her life, a very wonderful thing.

Strangely humbled, her features softened by a wistfulness which gave them a rare and startling beauty, she left her bench and stood beside the artist.

"Billy!" she said tremulously. "Billy, I have come!"

Slowly William Henderson turned and looked at her.

Suppressing a cry, she recoiled from the scorn in the stern, unhappy eyes.

"Do you think," he said deliberately, "that I want Gordon Reid's mistress?"

XIV

IN the revulsion of feeling of agony and shame and love—she knew herself at last. It was love, this pervading, importunate furore in her heart. Kit stood immovable. With all her mind she had loved Gordon Reid; with all her heart she loved Billy Henderson; and the former love dwindled now into insignificance, a paltry thing.

Her eyes became deeply, mysteriously luminous, and with a smile of wistful triumph on her lips she answered him.

"You only say those words, Billy, because you do not know. If you will hear me, I can explain everything. If you will not hear me, I shall—go away."

It was a strangely humbled Kit who spoke; yet no emotion was ever able to disguise the vital, throbbing force of her personality or slur the brightness of her imperious charm. Although physically weary to the point of collapse, the spirit in her burned undimmed and created a tempestuous disturbance in the breast of the artist which was curiously intermingled with fear—fear for himself, susceptible as he had always been to the least variation in Kit's moods and responsive to her lightest word. It was Kit who had awakened his intellect; Kit who had fired his genius; Kit who had slowly but irrevocably aroused his heart to the capacity for suffering it now endured.

"If you will not hear me," Kit repeated, "I shall go away."

"I am listening," he returned quietly.

Kit drew a long breath. "My letter," she began, "should have explained everything; but if you persist in misunderstanding me, I shall try to exonerate myself in your eyes."

"Your letter?" William said curi-

ously. "Perhaps you have not realized the fact that during the twelve or more years of our acquaintance I have never received one line from you."

Kit's brain reeled. "My letter from Oakhurst!" she cried. "I wrote to Beatrice and I wrote to you."

"Beatrice has not heard from you," he returned deliberately, "since the long letter she wrote to you about—me. She has confessed so much to me, Kit—that for once in her life she had the courage to go below the surface with you; and she mentioned the fact of having shown me your letters. I believed in you, then, you know, and your letters to Beatrice meant everything to me. Laugh if you want to; I realize it is—funny."

"Thank you," Kit replied, with cold disdain, "I have no desire to laugh."

"You should have realized, it strikes me, that Beatrice wrote from the depth of her love for you and with a very real desire to help."

"I did realize it."

"Perhaps you do *not* realize that your silence after that letter has hurt her cruelly. Beatrice has proved her friendship for you time and time again, Kit—and God knows there never was a truer friend in the world! Why didn't you answer?"

"I did answer. I have told you before that I did answer. I wrote at the same time that I wrote to you—telling you that I would marry you!"

Her laugh rang out harshly.

After an instant's galvanized silence he answered, his tones shocked with horror:

"When did you write to me, Kit? When? When? Good God, tell me when?"

"A year ago."

A groan of anguish escaped him. "But didn't you realize," he cried peremptorily, "that your letter could never have reached me when I did not answer?"

"When I was able to think about it at all I concluded that you had answered and that your letter had gone astray. As I was unable to hold even a pencil for months, I was forced to

depend longer on your loyalty. I would have come long ago—a year ago, on the heels of my letter—but for my accident."

"What accident?" His tone was savage.

"The accident which laid me helpless for a year and which was the cause of my present lameness. I shall be all right again eventually, but it will take time. I was thrown from a horse." Her brain had been working back with feverish activity and she suddenly cried out in distress: "Those letters! They are still in the skirt pocket of my habit! I was going to mail them myself at the post office the afternoon I was hurt."

William's face suddenly hardened.

"These letters, I understand, were written from Oakhurst?"

"Yes," Kit answered steadily, "they were. But—believe it or not, as you will—I did not know I was going to Gordon Reid's home until I stood inside the door. And then it was too late to draw back. Dr. Gibson was forced to operate at once to save Gordon's life. After that—it was a contemptible but not a dishonorable thing to do, for the law had separated us as wholly as though we had never met—I remained there in my professional capacity as nurse."

"You were there," William said keenly, "after Gordon was up and about and had gone back to his work. He wrote me a business note from his office one day—he is handling some mining property of mine out in Nevada—and mentioned casually that he was making an early train for Oakhurst and that you were the attraction which drew him there."

"Oh!" Kit cried, a flash of white-hot shame and despair searing her consciousness. "Did Gordon write that to you? He did come home early one day—the day I faced death cheerfully, gladly, rather than grant him the privilege of riding with me; he had taken a contemptible advantage of my enforced presence there and aggravated me persistently with his attentions."

The inherent honesty of Kit's nature forced William to believe her word implicitly. Yet as she was clearing her

honor in his eyes, his heart the more surely yielded to a dumb, deadening despair.

"'Enforced presence'? Forgive me, but I don't quite understand." His voice was gentle, with the old sympathetic note strongly marked.

Rapidly, passionately she told him the story of her responsibility for Winnie's accident and of the agonizing self-reproach which followed, causing her to stay on at Oakhurst and give herself up to the most exacting nursing that the child might once more regain the use of her limbs.

"Is that so difficult a thing to understand?" she whispered. "If somebody had been hurt because of your carelessness or indifference, wouldn't you do all in your power to make things right again, and count your efforts as nothing if you succeeded?"

"Yes," said William, with a strange intentness. "And it makes little difference whether the hurt we have caused is physical or mental. The indebtedness is still greater, I think, if we have hurt the spirit. That is why I married Nathalie."

XV

He turned and motioned Kit across the pavement to the bench she had left a short time before.

"Please sit down. I have a great deal to say to you."

There was something so sternly straightforward in the direct utterance that Kit never dreamed of the effort it was costing him to speak of his marriage. She was stunned and bewildered by the new turn of affairs and wondered a little drearily why he should find it necessary to tell her the story.

"You have said yourself, Kit, that if we hurt anybody we must make amends, if it is at all within our power." He paused, finding unexpected pain and difficulty confronting him in his confession.

"Go on," said Kit lifelessly, her eyes on the restless tumbling of the little waves below on stones which they had

worn to a round and smooth uniformity—imitating to the very best of their ability their more dignified brothers of the Atlantic.

"I must go back a bit over my life," William went on, leaning forward and clasping his hands between his knees. His eyes, too, were fixed on the sea. "Otherwise things will not be clear to you. It is necessary that they be clear—absolutely clear. When I found out that you did not care for me—you must understand, Kit, that you were the central pivot round which my whole existence swung—my life became aimless, my work clearly not worth while. I can readily understand the scorn in your mind as I tell you this. I could not have had much strength of character, you'll say. It is perfectly true: I had not. You are a New Englander, with generations of hard-brained, hard working men and women back of you. I am a Southerner, with no more grit inherited in my make up than can come from a long line of Southern landowners who had nothing to do from one year's end to another but ride and fish and consult their own pleasure. Even my father's death and the fact that the sale of every inch of ground of the old plantation was necessary to meet the debts he had incurred did not make a man of me.

"I had been a classmate of Gordon Reid at college, and learning of my father's death and the circumstances arising from it, he wrote and offered me a place in his office, which I gratefully accepted. The work, if not congenial to me, was at least not exacting, and I was content to drift on in fatuous ignorance of the real things to be got out of life. The night he took me home to dinner for the first time marked the beginning of my awakening. Gordon and you and I—only the three of us! I remember the gleaming table, the softly shaded lights, the hushed footfalls of the butler, and a great Russian hound which never left your side. You wore a gown of some soft maroon-shaded stuff, and two things about you impressed themselves indelibly upon me—the poise of your head and the

fact of your strange stillness and repose when I could *feel* the extraordinary galvanic life in you. When you looked at me, impersonal though your glance was, my sluggish blood pounded in my veins at a pace which left me breathless and bewildered. I went home to draw you as I remembered you best that evening—in the big chair in the drawing-room before an open fire, with your hand resting on the head of your great shaggy shadow. It was a long time before I mustered courage to offer you the sketch. I wanted to give you something—something personal yet not too personal. I wanted to tell you what great, painful happiness you had brought into my life; but of course that was out of the question. Moreover, I was well aware of the scorn in which you held me. You were too well bred ever to betray a hint of this; but my love for you had established a sort of wireless station in my heart which recorded many things—among them your desperate unhappiness. This, of course, I should never have learned from you.

"The sketch proved the second milestone on the road of my awakening. Armored by your unexpected belief in my genius and goaded by your scorn for my inadequate self, I tore myself away from you and went abroad to study. You had successfully drawn me from my shallow little puddle of slothful, contented blindness, and set me adrift on the surging current of life, where I was forced to swim if I cared to avoid the unpleasant alternative of sinking. When I thought of returning to the old way of living, to my bewilderment, the sheltered puddle had lost its charm.

"Your belief equipped me with a self-confidence I did not possess, and to my undying astonishment I found myself making good. My sketches and smaller canvases found a ready sale, which enabled me to go on with my studies. In my fatuous conceit I believed that I owed it to you to develop the very best there was in me. My reward was to be your approbation, nothing more; but that reward I was

determined to gain, to efface your stinging scorn. Three years later, when I heard of your divorce, I left Paris at once to go to you. My disappointment was keen when I learned that during those years of heartrending labor I had perhaps not entered your thoughts a single time. But you were unhappy and in desperate need of a friend. It was perhaps not the time to speak of love, yet I told you in my blundering fashion that my love would ever be waiting for you, on the chance that you might some day—when you could gain a clearer perspective of things and piece together a bit your broken life—find it worthy of acceptance. Long ago I had definitely hitched my wagon to the star of your inspiration, which had drawn it through untold difficulties, on up to the dizzying heights of success. At first I had worshiped you from afar, but humbly, for you were then beyond my reach; when I heard of your release I wanted leave to *love* you. I wanted you to descend from your ethereal loftiness to the lowlier plane of the wagon. It was not presumption, for I had now a definite place in the world to offer you; my fame was in its infancy, but I did not underestimate its valuation nor the capabilities of its growth."

He paused for a moment, and when he went on again it was in a lower tone.

"As the years passed and brought no word from you, my love did not diminish, but because of its hopelessness became intermingled with a torturing quality which drove me to excess. I had become successful beyond my most far reaching dreams, but the futile emptiness of that success mocked me. My attic stifled me and my restlessness drove me finally to join Jack and Beatrice in their wild 'doing' of Italy, as Beatrice characteristically expressed it. In Rome I came across an astonishingly ugly, original boy, who found himself, because of a mad, quixotic, beautiful wild goose chase, stranded in a foreign country with no means back of him save an undeveloped talent. Finding him distinctly worth while and overwhelmingly grate-

ful for my notice of him, I took him back to Paris with me. If I could hitch his genius to my star and the star should prove amenable and carry him as far as yours had carried me, my debt would be canceled, my place filled, and I should feel no further obligation to go on. I could never hope to repay you for digging up my talents from the grave where I had cravenly hidden them, but my sense of indebtedness remained, and I chose this method of canceling it. I tried to explain it all to the boy, but he was able to get only a twisted viewpoint of things, which left my gross weakness altogether out of the question.

"It was shortly after this that Gordon's note came to me, and in my reckless bitterness I cried quits with fate. Even the boy recoiled from my savageness at times, although his love for me never wavered—a clean, honest, boyish, whole-souled love, which in itself should have shamed me into decency. But it was not the boy; it was Nathalie who accomplished my reform—Nathalie, a curious mixture of fire and submissiveness, a woman and yet a child—with a child's wistful, bewildered wonderment at the repeated disillusionments of a pitifully unhappy life. I came upon her quite by chance one day and was immediately impressed with her possibilities for a picture I had in mind. She came and posed for me. I found her versatility amazing and the possibilities of her features and temperament limitless; yet weeks went by and I was too restless to finish the second picture, which hung fire in various stages of incompleteness until, thoroughly out of patience, one day I daubed it into oblivion with a few savage strokes. Nathalie's disappointment was keen, I realized from her tragic face; but she made no outcry. After this a change slowly began to develop in her manner, which puzzled me when I stopped to think about it. She had been so radiantly happy that I was at a total loss to account for her alternate sullenness and passionate outbursts of temper. She came infrequently to the studio, but I scarcely

noticed her absences. It was only when she did not return for a month and I had a particularly nagging idea in my head for a picture that I went to hunt her up.

"The shock of our meeting that day in her squalid home I shall never forget. Racked by an incessant cough—which had grown much worse since she had ceased to pose for me in my studio and had received at least two substantial meals a day—she refused at first to speak to me. The desperate, bitter, devil-may-care unhappiness in her eyes tortured me, and her laugh was no longer good to hear. When I peremptorily demanded an explanation of her desertion she suddenly gave it and did not spare me. She loved me—and the depths of that tempestuous love I did not dare to sound. As I did not care for her, she argued, what was there in life to live for? What difference did it make whether she was bad or good, alive or dead? She had been at last able to learn that my intense interest in her was merely because of her unusual professional capabilities. When the truth had come home to her and she grew more familiar with my contemptible existence, the whole aspect of her world changed. My example was surely not sufficient to cause her to keep within the narrow road of goodness—and why should she care greatly what became of her when I was utterly indifferent as to her fate? Since I had awakened her heart and mind to the finer issues of life, I was responsible for the suffering which this awakening involved. She had been unhappy before she met me, yes; but it had been a dogged, contented sort of unhappiness, because she had never looked for anything different—she had never looked beyond her own little puddle. Do you get the significance of it all? I was on my way to the dogs because of you, Kit; Nathalie was headed in the same direction because of me. A peculiar situation, with the solution, however, astonishingly apparent. Agonizingly apparent, too, in my own eyes, my contemptible cowardice.

"In rescuing Nathalie, I rescued my-

self as well, Kit. And several times I have been almost happy, as happy as I ever expect to be in this world—for I have made another human soul supremely happy. There can be no question of that. I married her and brought her here to Nice, as she could not possibly live through a winter in Paris. She is wretchedly ill—but oh, so splendidly brave!”

“Does your friend in Paris know of your marriage?” Kit asked when he paused, feeling that a remark of some sort was expected of her.

“No. It was Nathalie’s wish—a curious one—that the marriage be kept a secret. The Alderhursts alone of all my friends know of it. Although I don’t understand at all the reason for her request, I respect it.”

“Tomorrow,” announced Kit, taking little heed of what she was saying, “I shall go away.”

“Yes,” William answered steadily. “It is best for one or the other of us to leave Nice. Under ordinary circumstances I should be the one to go; but Nathalie is ill.”

XVI

ALONE in her room that night, Kit’s mind curiously refused to think. Again and again it attempted an attack on the subject uppermost in her thoughts, only to end in a half-hearted skirting of the outer edge of things and fall back numb and bewildered. She longed to form some definite conclusion of the unlooked for turn in her affairs and to plan some definite course of action; but her exhausted body refused to reinforce the tired brain, and so left it helpless to cope with the emergency.

Glad of an excuse to pin her wayward thoughts on any definite object, she inserted her finger in the envelope of the letter the clerk had given her a few hours earlier, one forwarded from her hotel in Paris. The handwriting was unfamiliar, and with a slight feeling of curiosity she turned to the signature. Wondering a little dazedly what Helen Reid might have to say to her—had

Gordon been contemptible enough to reveal her identity?—she settled herself under the light and began to peruse the thin, closely written sheets. It was a characteristic hand, not difficult to read.

OAKHURST, DECEMBER 18TH, 1908.

MY DEAR MRS. TRENOR:

You are probably wondering at the impulse which prompted me to write to you. Yet it is not strange, believe me. You alone of all the people in the world have glimpsed into my inmost heart of hearts and have seen the cankerous unhappiness that was there. I shall never forget the night I unburdened myself to you—an avowal brought about by your astonishing vital sympathy and sincerity.

Sympathy is a quality I realize now has been totally lacking in my make up; for it means the ability to put yourself in another’s place. Before that night I had been blindly narrow and bigoted, for I was curiously unable to view things from any standpoint other than my own; my very unhappiness had made me the more unreasonable. That night proved to be the climax of long weeks spent in contact with your fearless, sane outlook on life, which could not fail to show me clearly how to reach a true perspective of things; and my debt to you is very large. Unwittingly I saw with your eyes my own littleness. I cannot resist the temptation to write freely to you because to give happiness to another human soul is so divine a thing that it must of necessity—I should think—bring happiness with it. This happiness should be shared by you, for you alone showed me the way to it.

I had not understood Gordon. I had tried to make him over—to cut him out again over my pattern without respecting the individuality which it is the right of each one of us to possess. I had not tried at all to put myself in his place—to view myself with his eyes. When I did so the shock was distinctly grave, for I realized at last my petty, narrow-minded, nagging suspicions, which, while he did not know of their actual-

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ity, had had their belittling effect on me; my virtuous superiority which made me stand afar off and view him with harsh criticism, instead of taking my rightful place at his side—facing myself the armies of opposing things which he had to combat and so be in a position justly to value them at their worth. It was only when I humbly descended to his fighting plane—which, contradictorily enough, I learned to be loftier in reality than my own—that I realized the appalling strength of the forces arrayed against him. During his absence from the office things had gone dead wrong; his partner, whom he had trusted as he would trust himself, had given countenance to some shady transactions which would at once have stamped the firm with a destroying name had the facts become known. Gordon was able to save the day, but only in the nick of time and at a great financial loss to himself. The anxiety of those days must have been *fierce*—I can find no other word—and yet I knew nothing of his state of mind. I judged him harshly for his moodiness and silence, and my hostile attitude must have added materially to his discomfort. Adverse criticism can be keenly felt; it does not need words to uncover its stings. Added to business cares, he still was forced to fight great physical weariness; for he had insisted upon returning to the office long before Dr. Gibson wanted him to go, and the strain was almost more than he could endure. This, too, I did not appreciate. I upbraided him more than once for not going out with me in the evenings.

Just how it came about I do not know. But we underwent at last a mutual awakening. I was determined, after your sane attitude toward things had opened my eyes, to bring about an understanding, and I was utterly taken aback when Gordon met me a good deal more than halfway. I had anticipated silence on his part, or else the stinging innuendoes of which his tongue was past master. I had *not* anticipated the eager, almost wistful, frankness—marking his desire as well for a readjustment

of our lives. I remember the day well—it was on a Saturday—because he presented me with a great bunch of violets—your favorite flower—which he shamefacedly acknowledged he had forgotten to give you. He had gone away from the office early that afternoon, armed with Dr. Gibson's permission to see you for the first time after your accident.

The mutual understanding which followed our talk was complete. With an amazing frankness for which I could not but respect him he said he knew of "Kit's" contemplated marriage with Henderson, the great painter, and that her name need never again intrude itself into our thoughts. How he guessed it had obsessed my thoughts is beyond my comprehension; but I am too happy to bother my head about that point. He begged me to trust his word when he said the one object of his life would henceforth be to regain my trust and confidence and build up a solid foundation of happiness on which our future married life might rest secure. There was a ring of sincerity in his tones which would have made me believe him, whether I had been eager to do so or not. He was gentler than I had ever known him to be; and my newly awakened sympathy made me discover an underlying stratum of sadness in his make up which I had never before detected. I could not help but think that my blind egotism and variance had been to blame for this.

Out of the wreck of our old lives we are building up a new—a brighter, stronger temple of harmony than the old one could ever have turned out to be, even had no misunderstanding come to destroy it. For this time it is reared on *faith*. There can be faith without love—although some deny the possibility. Mutual understanding and fearless frankness are its parts. When sympathy is added to these the result is love. Faith is two-thirds of love. Without faith, love is impossible.

Whether love will ever crown our lives, it is perhaps too early to foretell. With all my heart I hope and pray that it may. Sometimes, when hope is

strong within me—and that is not infrequent—I am confident that it must come.

I hope, my very dear Mrs. Trenor, that the ocean voyage will by this time have given you back your old strength. I want you to understand—and I am sure Gordon would say the same were he here—that you have a welcome at Oakhurst which you need never feel in danger of wearing out; and if you will come to us for a visit when you return from Paris we shall receive you with open arms and open hearts. Dr. Gibson tells us that it is entirely owing to you that Winifred is her own lively self again, and we are in your debt to a greater extent than we can ever hope to repay.

Believe me to be very sincerely your friend,

HELEN H. REID.

Slowly Kit folded up the letter and returned it with painful exactness to its envelope. So her words to Gordon in the hospital on that stormy afternoon had, after all, proved effective. She had appealed to and roused his better nature—and somewhere in the depths of his enigmatic personality there dwelt a bit of nature of sterling worth, which she had more than once dimly guessed to be Gordon's real self, veneered for reasons she had never been able to fathom with his habitual mocking indifference. She need no longer consider herself the destroying force of Helen Reid's life. One debt had been canceled; the other seemed to all intents and purposes to have been paid off by somebody else—by Nathalie.

Oh, yes—that was it! Of course! He had married Nathalie. How strange of her to have forgotten! That was the meaning of the queer, sleeping numbness about her heart, which was gradually giving place to innumerable stabs of a painful awakening.

In answer to a knock at the door, which she remembered she had forgotten to lock, she called out, "Come!" It did not seem strange for any person to be knocking at her door at two o'clock in the morning. Nothing was strange any more. It would have

been strange for things to happen again in an ordinary, everyday sort of way.

"Come in," she repeated.

The door opened and showed Lady Alderhurst standing on the threshold.

Even this was not strange, Kit thought dully.

XVII

LADY ALDERHURST closed the door carefully and stood with her back to it, her hand still on the knob. She was neither tall nor short, dark nor fair, nor of any distinctive type. And yet undeniably she was stamped sterling—in the carriage of her head, the engaging frankness of her features, the natural graciousness of unusually winning manners. Her own sincerity and warmth of heart created a feeling of enthusiastic loyalty in the hearts of her countless friends which even repeated absence could never dull. She had not returned to America since her marriage to Lord Alderhurst, and yet she was as vitally necessary to the lives of her friends there as she had been when ready to receive them—always with her own inimitable welcome—at any hour of the day or night, to sympathize keenly with their distress or exult madly with them over some absurd adventure.

This matchless woman had been not only her friend but her chum since girlhood, Kit thought with a reckless abandonment to bitter grief. And she had hurt her cruelly, Billy had said. That the hurt had been given unwittingly seemed to count for very little in the light of the present tense circumstances.

"Kit, I have come to you for two reasons." Beatrice did not move away from the door, but Kit was made aware of a vital, throbbing current of sympathy in the atmosphere which almost unnerved her. "I am going to speak of myself first because it will only take a moment, and then we need never touch upon the subject again." Her straight glance reached into the tem-

pestuous depths of Kit's dark eyes and she smiled wistfully.

Kit had left the deep chair at her entrance and stood by the table, folding and unfolding Helen Reid's letter. The restlessness of the slender fingers betrayed to Beatrice more than anything else could have done the change in her friend. Kit's stillness had always been pronounced and had proved one of the most valuable assets in her professional life.

"William has told me," Beatrice went on, "of the letter you wrote me which is still in the pocket of your habit. Kit, I want that letter. I have a curious feeling that I shall learn from it more than you will ever again breathe to me of your own accord. And it belongs to me, you know. There is surely somebody in Baltimore whom you could ask to forward it."

Kit looked back to the intimate revelations the letter contained, and she experienced a curious satisfaction in the idea that Beatrice would learn of her trust, even if her actions had made her chum's friendship no longer a possibility.

In this she underestimated Beatrice's love.

"The letter belongs to you," she acquiesced. "I shall send for it."

"William told me about it," Beatrice continued, "because he said he was confident you would never speak of it yourself. He knows you thoroughly, Kit. So, fortunately for myself, do I. If I did not understand you so well, I am afraid I should have given you up long ago as a bad job." She laughed tremulously and the tenderness of her features was infinitely appealing. "It is only bad weather, Kit, which has warped you a bit on the outside. When the sun comes out again in your life, chum of mine, the goodness and the bigness in you will flourish, you may be sure."

"It is decidedly an inferior sort of goodness and bigness, isn't it, Beatrice, which refuses to flourish under adversity." There was a wistfulness in her voice which matched Beatrice's own. "I am not worthy a love such as you

have given me, a love which, overlooking so many failures, has brought you to me tonight."

"I came to ask forgiveness for misjudging you, Kit. William has not told me all, but he has told me enough to show me how great my injustice has been. I knew nothing of your accident, and I fancied my letter from Rome to have been the cause of your silence. I should have known you better than that. It was contemptible of me."

"There is nothing to forgive," Kit whispered, finding her voice unexpectedly gone. Her throat ached with the tears Beatrice's unexpected attitude had brought there.

"Then," Beatrice cried imperiously, swiftly crossing the room and grasping Kit's shoulders with a strong, loving touch, "then we shall never again speak of this misunderstanding—let's bury it, tooth and nail!" She forced her captive back against the wall and rejoiced when Kit's eyes met hers with the well known squareness from under the level brows. "Is it a bargain?"

"With all my heart," breathed Kit.

"I always look at the ledger when I come in," Beatrice continued, "and I saw your name there with the number of your room. But as it was so late when we got back from Monte Carlo I concluded you would be asleep. Then after I had seen William—dear old fellow—I rather fancied you would be off first thing in the morning—perhaps before I could catch you. So I came up, determined to have things out with you whether I roused you from your beauty slumbers or not."

"I asked for you when I first came in," Kit said. "But they told me you were not expected back before Monday."

Beatrice's features suddenly clouded.

"A curious thing happened," she answered. "I can't understand it thoroughly. Jack and I were at one of the Rouge et Noir tables when suddenly a fearful depression seized me. It was not caused by bad luck—the runs had been against me, but as I was not staking heavily I had lost

very little—but by some unaccountable feeling of breathlessness, intermingled with an unreasoning terror and oppression of spirits which made me leave the table and hunt desperately for an unoccupied balcony. I have had the same feeling sometimes during a storm, when the wind stops for a moment, but only, as everyone knows, to concentrate its forces for another and more furious onslaught. I felt myself waiting for something to happen—waiting with tense, agonized, taut nerves!

"As I stepped out of doors the beauty of the night bewildered me the more, for if atmospheric conditions—I have always been susceptible to them, as you know—were not causing my unrest, what could be the explanation? I looked up into the moon and the few far twinkling stars, perhaps with a prayer in my heart—I don't know—but my mind was at rest; for the explanation of it all became quite clear. Nathalie wanted me. Why I was so sure of this I can not tell you; it seemed very simple. From a child, Nathalie says, the stars have counted for so much in her life. In times of greatest stress and loneliness, she told me once, when all her little world has seemed to be reeling to its foundation, they have appeared infinitely near and kind; and because of their silent obedience to immutable law have given her the courage to go on. I did not think it at all strange that the stars tonight should signify Nathalie wanted me."

Kit herself did not think it strange. She had always considered Beatrice's make up to be two-thirds spiritual.

"I hunted Jack and asked him to bring me back to Nice. If I requested Jack to start for the Fiji Islands some fine time at midnight I think he would acquiesce with the same cheerful alacrity. As we motored back I told him a bit of what had happened, and he spared no pains to get me here in the shortest possible space of time. I had had the same experience at boarding school when my mother was dying—do you remember, Kit?—call it telepathy, if you will—

and reached home in time to see her before she left us. I entered the house as Phil came out, on his way to telegraph me."

"I remember," said Kit.

"I had told Jack of this, long ago. Apparently he too was thinking of it tonight, for we came at high speed. When I saw William he said that Nathalie had seemed worse earlier in the evening and had asked for me repeatedly. Later she had dropped off to sleep, and was resting so quietly that he had not hesitated to take his evening stroll before bedtime."

For the old nickname of Billy to be so radically changed to William, even by as old a friend as Beatrice, impressed Kit more than ever with the change which had taken place in the man himself.

"William is with her constantly, and it is more for her sake than for his own that he goes out for a while in the evening. She is terribly distressed about keeping him so closely confined. It was one of the bravest things a man ever did, Kit"—Beatrice spoke in a lower tone of voice, but her eyes met Kit's with unequivocal honesty—it had never been her way to beat about the bush—"to marry Nathalie in just the way William did. And since his marriage he has not let the shadow of a question come into her head that she is not his whole life to him. Not Nathalie herself, but the fact of marrying Nathalie, has made him what he is. Nothing else could have done it—not even you, Kit, I am now convinced. Fate knew what she was about when she intercepted those letters—although there is nobody sorer than I am for the method she employed. It was preposterous of me to urge you to marry William when I knew you never loved him. I did not give him credit for the keenness of perception I have recently learned belongs to him. He would have found out in time the mockery of your feelings, however cleverly you might have attempted to disguise them, and things very probably would have turned out more

unhappily than ever, thanks to my interference. Matters are certainly best as they are, so far as I can see. At any rate, your heart isn't broken over the outcome, as love has played no part in the deal with you."

XVIII

KIR was supremely grateful at this point for the interruption of a gentle but imperative knock. She hastily crossed the room to open the door herself, and was startled to find Lord Alderhurst there.

"You will pardon my intrusion, I know," he said gravely. "Nathalie is asking for Beatrice. I am going to take it upon myself to ask you to come with us, Mrs. Trenor. We have sent for the doctor, but it may be some time before he arrives, and in the meanwhile your professional knowledge may be of assistance."

"She is worse, Jack?" Beatrice asked swiftly.

"Yes. Will you come?"

"Of course!" She turned back impulsively and held out her hand to Kit. "You may be able to help," she said with simple directness.

Kit followed them out into the silent hall and down the wide stairs to the door of the room directly beneath her own, resolutely refusing to give heed to the storm of emotions which assailed her. The slight click of the latch as Lord Alderhurst turned the knob of the door fell with startling distinctness upon the eerie silence pervading the hotel.

The room they entered was in cheerful contrast to the dark halls without. Comforts and accessories, added by degrees, had given distinctly a home-like atmosphere to the hotel bedroom. All the lights were turned on, and under a branch light there was a divan piled high with inviting cushions. In the middle of the room a round table held books and the latest copy of the Paris edition of the *Herald* and a bright Roman workbag—half open—in work-a-day confusion. The walls were cov-

ered with big posters, Italian time-tables, most of them, announcing the schedule in the lower right-hand corner in hours ranging to the twenty-four. There was one of Lago Maggiore, giving the lake in perspective between near marble columns. Surrounding the lake towered serried ranks of snow-clad mountains; on the blue water were scattered innumerable boats. In the foreground, banked against the white columns, was a profusion of scarlet poppies. The whole was bold of design, brilliant yet harmonious in coloring and distinctly artistic. There was another poster of the Matterhorn, that grim guardian of the Alps, rising with its austere dignity and its invariable crown of fleecy cloud, into the blue depths of a Swiss sky. Two big chairs and some rough bookshelves added further touches of "livableness," as Beatrice had expressed it. On the shelves were sets of Balzac, Daudet and Hugo, a volume of Pierre Loti's exquisite stories and a few books of English authors. On the big four-poster bed a gay Roman blanket was spread out in full glory.

The occupant of the bed herself was far from striking a discordant note in the harmonious atmosphere of cheerfulness. An exquisite face of startling, unexpected beauty met Kit's eyes as she followed Beatrice into the room—a face which, although white and thin, was transfigured by a radiant happiness which looked, too, from the depths of the great luminous eyes.

"Ah, Lady Be'trice has brought her frien'!" she declared, with a gay little laugh, turning on her pillow and impatiently brushing aside the riotous waves of her unbound hair. "I tol' her tha' she mus' not trouble you."

Kit was suddenly genuinely startled by the unexpected intensity of Nathalie's gaze. The dark brilliant eyes locked hers in a glance impossible to break, while they furrowed their way deep down into Kit's soul.

Apparently satisfied by the scrutiny, she turned to William standing beside the bed, and his stern features relaxed into a tender attentiveness.

"Wil-liam," she coaxed, reaching out and twining her transparent fingers about his, "you will take Lady Be'trice and Lord Alderhurst into the other room, jus' for a little while, *n'est-ce pas?* And shut the door ver' hard. I am better, ver' much better. You can see I am. It was the cough scare you so—tha' was all. The cough! I mus' speak to—to—" Nathalie looked toward Kit inquiringly.

"Kit," she suggested gently. Her professional eyes read aright the signs which William misinterpreted as returning strength. She knew there was little to be done.

"I mus' speak to Kit," Nathalie went on with playful firmness.

"Very well, little woman." Kit saw that Billy's smile had lost none of its old sweetness. "But it seems to me I have good grounds for jealousy." His well assumed attitude of injury brought a merry little laugh from his wife. "Here you meet—Kit—for the first time in your life, and now you must discuss State secrets—behind closed doors, to boot! Come along, Beatrice. Out with you, Jack! We promise faithfully not to listen at the keyhole, although I must say the temptation is great."

Taking each of his friends forcibly by an arm he marched them into the adjoining room and closed the door.

"You mus' come, please, and sit on the bed," Nathalie cried peremptorily, as soon as they were out of earshot. "I have a ver' great deal to say and per-haps not so ver' much time."

Kit swiftly left her place beside the table and seated herself on the edge of the big bed. Her eyes were drawn, as by a magnet, to the eager, radiant face on the pillow.

"I wanted dear Lady Be'trice to-night—oh, ver' much!" Nathalie spoke rapidly, but handled the English words with characteristic preciseness. "I heard she had gone to Monte Carlo, and I was ver' much afraid she would not come back in time for me to tell her what I mus' tell some-body before I die. She did come back—when I was asleep—and jus' as soon as I wake' up I sen' for her to come to

me. She tol' me you were here—she want' ver' much to bring you to me—but I say no and preten' to sleep again. I had to think ver' hard and ask God to put the right words in my heart when I should see you. It is much better to talk with you than with dear Lady Be'trice. God was good to sen' you to me tonight—when I want for to see you so ver' much."

"You wanted to see me?" Kit whispered in astonishment.

"Yes. Why not? You are Kit." She added the explanation simply, as if it were adequate explanation for many things. "Always have I want' to see Kit."

Kit was silent. What new development of the complication was forthcoming? she wondered.

"He loves you, Kit, but he does not know that I have guess' long ago." Nathalie's smile was radiant. It expressed a triumph which wholly eliminated any thought of jealousy. There was no room in that beautiful nature for the uglier characteristics of life. "One day—a long time ago—I open' the door of the studio ver' queeck—I had lef' my muff. Wil-liam thought I was not to come back again until the nex' day. He had place' a picture on the easel, and he was looking at it with his back to me. I peep' over his shoulder and saw that it was a ver' beau-ti-ful picture of a lady sitting before a fire with her hand on the head of a grea' big white dog. He did not hear me, and twice he say, 'Kit, Kit!' Tha' was all, but tha' was enough, *n'est-ce pas?* I know then what mak' him to be so sad. He was the ver' saddest man I ever knew." Nathalie looked up into Kit's eyes with sudden passionate entreaty. "You mus' mak' him happy, Kit!"

"I?" echoed Kit, striving to conceal the depth of her startled wonder.

"*Vraiment, toi!*" Nathalie's vehement voice rang out sharply. "He loves you, Kit! *Mon Dieu*, yes! He marry me because he was so good and big and gen'rous—he wan' save me from myself. Le' me tell you. When I learn of you, Kit, I wan'

ver' much to write to you." A little laugh of amusement rippled from her lips.

"But a letter address' jus' to 'Kit' would not go ver' far! I could not ask Wil-liam—I could not ask dear Lady Be'trice—they did not know I had learn' of you. So I could not write at all! I want for to tell you how sad and unhappy you were making Wil-liam to be. I knew if I tol' you, you would come to him, *n'est-ce pas?*"

Kit's silence was the only answer to this wistful appeal, but Nathalie interpreted it as corroboration of her own simple views.

"But I could not write. And so I marry Wil-liam to save him from the wicked devil which had got hol' of him—to save him for you."

"For me?"

"Yes, for you. Love, Kit, is the greates' and the most beau-ti-ful thing God ever gave to His people. Wil-liam once read to me a little verse of love—about love bein' life's reward."

"I think I know the verse you mean," said Kit softly. "I like it too."

"Love is life's end; an end but never ending;

All joys, all sweets, all happiness awarding.
Love is life's wealth (ne'er spent, but ever spending),

More rich by giving, taking by discarding.
Love's life's reward, rewarded in rewarding;
Thou wilt not learn to live unless thou learn to love."

"Thou wilt not learn to live unless thou learn to love!" A flashlight of comprehension suddenly illumined Kit's soul. This was the meaning of the ecstasy in her heart which, through the long, painful hours of the night, while her mind was bewildered by fortune's checkmate, had sung its pæan of thanksgiving to her whole quivering, responsive consciousness. It had been given her to love—and she saw with Nathalie's clear understanding the wonder and the greatness of the gift. She marveled at the ignorance which had prompted her earlier prayer, *to be loved*; its answer could not have brought with it this significative com-

prehension of the fundamental meaning of life. She had tasted of life's fullness, and the sudden vital realization of this charged her heart with its bitter-sweet poignancy.

"Tha's it. Yes, tha's it. Wil-liam loved you with a ver' great love, and a ver' great love is a ver' great gift, but"—Nathalie's voice sank wistfully—"he had not prov' *worthy* of the gift. At firs' I tri' to talk to him—but he did not care—he did not care! His love had turn' into a curse."

She closed her eyes wearily, but swiftly opened them and began to speak with greater vehemence as Kit started to rise.

"Don' go—I mus' tell all—or you will go away and hate me because you do not understan'."

"Hate you?" breathed Kit, kneeling down impulsively beside the bed and firmly imprisoning Nathalie's restless fingers, which closed with feverish intensity about her own. "Hate you?"

"Yes—because you do not understan'. I am afraid you will hate me because I marry Wil-liam after I foun' out he lov' you. I tri' to save Wil-liam from himself, but he did not care!" The wearily repeated words struck a minor chord in Kit's heart which continued to sound a sinister accompaniment long after another key had been reached.

"By and by, when I saw nothing made any matter with him—nothing—I wonder why things should make so much matter with me. And by and by I foun' I did not care—I foun' I did not care." Nathalie's voice sank to a whispering sigh. The light had died out of the eager face; the great dark eyes met Kit's broodingly.

"You loved him!" Kit exclaimed with passionate pity. "Ah, my dear, you loved him!"

The radiance of Nathalie's smile again was bewildering, while the exquisite tenderness of it made Kit think of the face of the Madonna she had seen back in the studio at Paris.

"Yes, I loved him," she answered softly. "But it was a mother-ing love—like the love a mother feel for her son when she tri' to save him and—"

and fail. Tha' was it, Kit!" She drew a quick gasping breath, which Kit swiftly guessed to be the repression of a telltale sob.

"No—no! It was not that!" she cried impulsively. Mothers, she knew, do not follow in their sons' wayward footsteps; they only pray or else in stony silence endure. "No," she repeated and paused abruptly. If Nathalie wished her to believe the preposterous falsehood, she would humor her now and perhaps later find a clue.

"But yes—like a mother!" Nathalie persisted wistfully. "And you mus' believe me when I tell you I would not have marry him at all if I had not know it would be for such a ver' short time. Truly, Kit! He came to look for me when I did not go back to the studio, and when he foun' nothing made much matter with me, he—he was sorry. And"—she drew a long breath—"he ask me to marry him. I say yes, if he make me a promise to tell nobody—nobody excep' dear Lady Be'trice."

"Why did you do that?" Kit demanded suddenly.

"I did not wan' Kit should ever know," was the passionate answer. "I did not think she perhaps could understand. I did not wan' for her to be unhappy. It could not be for a ver' long time," she added in a whisper, "and I did not b'lieve God would punish me for steal so little time of happiness."

"You have been happy?" Kit asked intently, and was answered by the flashing face before the words dropped from the tender lips.

"Happy? Yes! More happy than I ever dream I could be. Wil-liam make me to be ver' happy. He tri' to make me think he love' me—me only! He has nevaire tol' me so, you understand—you mus' not think he does not love you—but he has always been so kin', so kin'—he has wan' me to think he love me better than all the world. It is a ver' wonderfu' thing to make somebody happy, a ver' wonderfu' thing. A long time ago I nevaire dream tha' when I die I should be

happy. You," she added suddenly, "mus' make Wil-liam to be happy. I mus' have your promise."

"Nathalie!"

"I have pray so hard," the tired, eager voice went on, "for you to know how much he love you. I wan' so hard for him to be happy because then I can b'lieve God will not punish me."

"You must not think that!" Kit cried sternly.

"Do you—for-give me, Kit?"

"There is nothing—nothing to forgive."

Nathalie sat up straight in bed and pushed back her heavy hair.

"Kit," she panted, "do you love him?"

William's thin face, with its stern sweetness of expression as he had bent his gaze to meet his wife's eager eyes, flashed before Kit's mental vision. Did she love this man!

It was not the time for veiled inference or prevarication.

"Yes," she said, with naked truth.

A sob rose in her throat when she saw the desperate little smile of triumph flit across the other's features.

"I am satisfi'!" Nathalie dropped back on her pillows and the smile swiftly became transfigured with a gladness Kit had never before beheld on human countenance. "You love him and you will make him to be happy."

The door from the other room opened softly and William entered.

"We forgot to agree on the signal," he said humorously, "which should mark the termination of your conference. I began to feel very much out of things."

His eyes swept Nathalie's features with a keenness belied by his laughing words. Then for the fraction of a second they sought Kit's and found corroboration of his fears.

Nathalie smiled up at him brightly.

"I have been telling Kit," she whispered, with her old, tender gaiety, "tha' you have make me to be so ver' happy, Wil-liam!"

"Have I, little woman?" he demanded swiftly, leaning over and gathering

her into his arms. "Have I? I should like to believe that. God knows I should like to believe that!" Reverently his lips imprinted a kiss on the pure, noble forehead.

Nathalie's eyes closed, and for a moment it seemed as though the brave, bright spirit had left its frail abiding place. But once again they opened and looked out with their wonted fire.

"Will you turn off the lights and open the windows, Wil-liam? There is a star who has tri' so ver' hard to look in. *De bon augure!*" From under the long lashes she flashed a final appeal to Kit. "We mus' not shut him out."

William laid her back gently, and

crossing the room pulled open the tall French windows and then turned the switch of the electric lights.

Outside a single star was visible, its tremulous silver beauty pleading with the dawn for longer sway. From below, the crashing and gurgling of the miniature waves came up to them and accentuated the stillness enveloping all the world in mystery.

Neither watcher knew when Nathalie's spirit slipped away into the invisible.

The first rays of the golden sun vanquished the silver star in flight. The long, dark night was ended. A new day had radiantly begun.



R E V E R I E

By HERMAN DA COSTA

DUSK upon the river,
And dusk upon the land;
But oh, the sorrow in my heart too deep to understand!

Who of my kin is dead, my heart, that you should mourn them so?
Or is it that you died yourself a thousand years ago?

Shadows in the water,
And lights upon the sea;
But oh, the shadows in my heart that are no part of me!

The western sky is faded gray; the night wind is ablow.
What is it in your silence, world, that makes me sorrow so?

Darkness on the river,
And darkness in the sky;
But oh, the sadness of the tomb where silence is a cry!

Evening on the ocean,
And far off ships at sea;
And oh, the sadness in my soul that breaks the heart o' me!

Who of my kin is dead, O heart, that you should sorrow so?
Or do you mourn a death you died a thousand years ago?
And the heart sighed low, as the night wind stirred the bay:
I grieve a part of me that died; I mourn the death of day.

In the darkness murmur
The voices of the sea,
But oh, the voice within my heart a-whispering to me!

A YELLOW GOSLING

By ALGERNON TASSIN

THE United States Attorney in the city of San Francisco was full of suppressed steam. It gave a jerk to every one of his movements as he sat at his desk with a creased forehead, tapping his teeth with his pen, dipping it into the ink with a sudden idea, throwing it down in disgust and taking it up again, but never writing. Every now and then he gave a little angry click with his tongue on the roof of his mouth, precisely like an over-charged boiler in need of relief. The relief in his case meant the scratching of a few words with that pen. He knew that his public vindication depended on his next move, and that a few words scratched on that paper would start another series of intricate maneuvers one way or another. It was only a question of which way he should choose. Either seemed as likely of success or failure, and failure to him meant the final rung of the civic ladder he had started out so triumphantly to climb a year ago when a swirl of reform had washed him suddenly out of his law firm and into the United States Attorney's office. So far he had been content to have himself written down as an incompetent, even as a fraud, for little by little he had felt himself drawing the lines upon the mysterious adversary who seemed to know his plans almost as soon as he had formulated them. Yesterday he had been on the point of springing his last mine, unmasking his last redoubt—today he was as far away as ever. And something must be done at once to retrieve his lost ground. Should he—

There came a knock at the door. He let his pen, poised for the twentieth

time, fall with a violence that splashed the paper with ink.

"Come in," he called sharply. He was in so rasped a state that by the time the door was opened he felt that he had been interrupted at a vital moment.

Detective Williams entered the room and touched his cap. Williams generally was as straight and short about his business as the fidgetiest superior could desire—but seeing before him a scowling face, he stood still and looked a bit foolish. Evidently he had perceived that his superior was in no proper mood for the matter he wished to introduce.

"Well, what is it?" asked the attorney curtly. It had always seemed to him that Williams made far too many reasons for entering his office.

Williams shifted his feet. "If you please, Mr. Madison," he said, "I've a case in here."

"A case?" said Madison in surprise. "What sort of case?"

"Stealing."

"Well, what have I got to do with it? Why do you bring it to me?" He took up his pen again impatiently.

"It's a soldier. Transport ship. Landed from the Philippines yesterday morning."

"Oh!" The United States Attorney grunted and flung down his pen again savagely. "Well, bring him in," he said. "Let's get through with him and turn him over to the grand jury."

Williams shifted his feet again. Madison had already noted this unusual uncertainty in a man who had always struck him as knowing more than most just where he wanted to

plant his feet. But instead of interesting him as to its cause, it only rasped his nerves the more.

"Say," said Williams, "he ain't much. He makes me sick! He's just nothin' at all!"

Madison gave him a questioning glance. There was a sort of indignant flurry about the man—generally as cool, indeed, insolently collected, an officer as there was on the force.

"What's the matter with you?" he asked. "Bring him in and let's get through with him." He rose brusquely. "I've got too much to do today to fool around with a picayune stealing case. What's the matter with you?" he asked more sharply, seeing that Williams still hesitated. "What about the fellow?"

"I looked him up. He had an honorable discharge on him, and his record was all right. Say—" He paused.

"Say what?" broke in the United States Attorney, snapping shut the lid of his watch.

"He ain't nothin' but a boy. He makes me think of a miserable yellow gosling. One that's just beginning to fuzz. I felt silly, luggin' him in. He's like a piece of warm taffy."

Madison gave a short laugh. He had no liking for Williams, though he knew him to be a more than ordinarily capable officer. Once or twice he had had reason to suspect that possibly here was the leak in the force through which all his plans had been divined in time to be checkmated. "So that's what's the matter with you, is it?" he said in some amusement. "Your prisoner's got on your nerves and made you feel like a fool. Well, what's the case?"

"A soldier reported this morning that his pay warrant had disappeared. He thought it had been stolen on the transport yesterday. This fellow was his bunkie—"

"His what?"

"His bunkie—had the bunk with him. And he cashed this first man's pay warrant at a pawnbroker's this mornin' for a suit of clothes and the rest in change—one hundred and twenty dol-

lars in all. We had him inside of two hours, and here's the pay warrant."

The attorney took the paper and examined it. "Did he forge the signature?" he asked. "Or did the other man sign it?"

"No, the other man hadn't signed it. Here's his signature. He left it with me this morning."

"We'll want him to identify this man. Where is he?"

"Don't know. He was to come back at twelve, and he hasn't shown up."

"Did he suspect this fellow?"

"No—he didn't say nothin' about him. I asked him who his bunkie was, and he laughed and said, 'A piece of butter.' Say, that's just what he is—a gob of melty butter. I asked him if he thought his bunkie had taken it. He said he didn't have stuffin' enough to take his share o' breath—let alone another man's."

"Well, bring him in. Two minutes will do for him. You've got his discharge with his own name on it, and he cashed another man's pay warrant with a forged signature. Have you got the pawnbroker there?"

"Yes," said Williams.

"Then we can get along without the other fellow. It's a mere matter of proving that the signature is in this man's handwriting. Bring him in."

The attorney went to his desk and sat down. As he pushed away impatiently the papers he had been poring over to no purpose, the splash of ink he had made when he threw down his pen caught his eye. In a second his mind was again on the problem. What move should he make next, and how, once it was determined on, could he keep it from being known to the enemy as soon as he had ordered it set in motion? He looked up to find Williams standing a step nearer, where his glance could cover the papers on the desk. All at once his vague conjectures as to the leak in the force crystallized into a positive suspicion of this man, and the suspicion into a moral certainty, as he rapidly reviewed their previous relations. Madison knew him to be an officer of considerable capacity,

but he had never trusted him in spite of his acknowledged superiority; and he knew him also to have a decidedly dubious record, although he had as yet never been caught red-handed. "He's as big and clever a rascal as we have on the force," the attorney reflected in a flash, "and that is saying a good deal." He folded his arms deliberately over the papers and gazed squarely at him.

"Why don't you go on?" he said. "I can't be all day on this thing."

Williams twiddled his cap. "He says he found the pay warrant, and I shouldn't wonder if he did."

The detective's attitude puzzled him. Now that he had begun to make a study of the man and perceived that he might possibly have to come to terms with him, everything about him at once became valuable. He made a mental note of two facts—the officer prided himself on being a judge of human nature, and he considered that his opinions ought to be of some weight. But what was the reason, he speculated in some amused surprise, for this almost bashful embarrassment in a man so entirely sure of himself? Was Williams getting sentimental? "What if he did find it?" he said carelessly. "He forged the signature and cashed it in, didn't he?"

"Yes," admitted the detective, "but I don't believe he stole it in the first place."

"Well," said the attorney drily, "your opinion is interesting, but in itself it does not constitute a reason why I should waste a whole afternoon on a trifling matter like this." He leaned forward slightly over his folded arms. "Especially," he continued slowly, "when I'm gunning for bigger game."

Williams's face immediately lost its expression of awkwardness. He returned the gaze frankly—almost pugnaciously, the attorney thought. "Yes," he said, "there's lots of game in 'Frisco. It wouldn't be hard to find bigger shooting than an ornery jack rabbit like him."

"That depends," said Madison,

"upon who's got a fence around the place you're gunning on and how many people he's got on the lookout." He paused a moment before adding: "And what opportunities they have for close observation. Don't you think so, Williams?"

The man still returned his gaze with the same impudent openness.

"Well," he said with the air of saying carelessly something of significance, "there's things in every kind of sport I guess you've got to look out for. But it makes a monkey of a man to jug a piece of butter like that."

"Well, as you've got to do something with him and it seems a pretty clear case, you might—if you're ready—bring him in. I am sufficiently impressed with the fact that you like to deal by preference with the man who puts up a fight." He smiled frostily. "I'm a fighter myself, you know."

"Oh, yes, I know that, Mr. Madison," said Williams cheerfully. For a moment the two men faced each other, and during that interval Madison said to himself: "I'd give a sixpence to know whether I'm sizing him up or he's sizing me." Then Williams left the room.

Presently he returned, bringing with him the pawnbroker and his prisoner. The pawnbroker was a pinched little German Jew with shoe buttons for eyes, and an oily beard, and he looked the bird of prey he was. He bustled into the room with an entirely silent step which seemed, nevertheless, to make a great deal of noise. Behind him shambled a boy about twenty years old, and very thin and long. He moved with a peculiar, loose-jointed gait and loose arms which, even with the slight momentum of walking from the one room into the other, flapped listlessly at his sides.

The attorney attended to the pawnbroker first. "Is this the man you cashed a pay warrant for this morning?"

"Yes, sir."

"How did you know it was his?"

The Jew's eyes began to gesticulate. "How did I know? Why, he said it

was. He took it out of his army pants. So help me, would it cross any honest man's mind it wasn't?"

The attorney cut him short. "What did you give him for it?"

"One hundred dollars."

"It was for a hundred and twenty, wasn't it?"

"Yes, sir. He bought the fine suit of clothes he has on."

"What! You charged him twenty dollars for those clothes?"

The Jew's eyes became more voluble and his hands darted to and fro as he itemized the purchase. "What! A fine coat, and a vest and a pants—and all the same shade of blue! And the derby, and the nice shirt he has on, and the high white collar and the fine cravat, and the collar buttons! And the trouble in cashing the cheque—I had to go out and raise the money!"

"Ah, I see. And you had no suspicion the pay warrant did not belong to him?"

"Suspicion? Me?" The Jew shot his beady eyes and his hands upward—it was the first time they had worked in unison. "Gott! Would I run the risk of losing my money and a fine suit of fast blue into the bargain? I thought he was the man, so help me! So help me, I tell you, yes!"

The attorney checked his tearful vociferations with a wave of his hand and turned to the prisoner. Officer Williams, he thought to himself, had an eye for other things than the interests of his unknown employers. His phrases were curiously apt. The boy, with his gawky length, his sickly white face patched with a yellow fuzz as yet untouched by a razor, and his sandy, stringy hair, looked decidedly like a gosling. Once the comparison hit upon, it kept coming back. His skin was almost transparent, on the bones of his face, and even the brows of his watery blue eyes were a whitey-yellow. Yes, he must give Williams credit for a picturesque vocabulary. The large, weak, sloppy mouth, also, with the underlip several sizes too small to close on the upper one—there was something about it very suggestive of a butter

mouth which had begun to melt and drag downward. The intense blue of the suit of clothes which he had on—of the shade known as huckleberry—with the ostentatious creases in sleeves and legs and their showy lapels faced with shiny scoured silk, the choker about his amazing length of neck, the loud plaid gingham tie—all these but increased the utter forlornness of his appearance.

"Did you get a hundred dollars and the clothes you have on from this man this morning in return for a pay warrant he cashed for you?"

"Yes, sir." The boy's voice was as stringy as his looks. It had a slight break in it. The attorney gave a mental jump—if you had thought of "gosling," there was the quack. He found himself wondering which idea had come first in Williams's mind.

"Where is the hundred dollars?"

"They took it away at the police office, sir."

The attorney turned to the pawnbroker. "You will get your hundred back. Let this be a warning to you. That will do."

"And the clothes? The fine suit of clothes?" the man put in eagerly.

"You may get those back, and you may not. Where are your other clothes?" he asked the boy.

"I gave them to this man and put these on in his shop."

"A few rags, just rags!" cried the pawnbroker. "So help me, only rags!"

"Did he give you any money for them?" persisted the attorney.

"Money!" almost shrieked the pawnbroker, dancing around with his silent step which seemed to make so much noise. "For what? I should have charged him by rights for taking them off in my shop! I would not ruin my reputation by selling such rags! Even to an actor to play on the stage! To no one!"

"Silence!" ordered the attorney. "Then why did you give them to him?" he said to the boy.

"I didn't want to see them again. I was sick of the service."

"You had no thought of a disguise?"

The boy opened his eyes—evidently this was a new idea to him. "Why, no, I hadn't," he said earnestly, but in a tone which betrayed that he was wondering why it hadn't occurred to him.

"A dir-ty old uniform," broke in the pawnbroker, prancing up and down. "It would take two quarts of benzine to make it fit to hang up in my shop, where is nothing but first class secondhand goods! And they was the flower of the lot. As blue as the harebell, and all one color. And that is all I get for my fine suit of clothes, *and* the collar, *and* the rest! Will I get them back, I say?"

"You better be thankful that you get any of it back. I might easily make you forfeit the whole amount. This will teach you not to cash soldiers' cheques again. Now clear out. We have done with you for the present."

"My fine suit—so help me!" the man was beginning to sob, when Williams, with quiet precision and not a movement too much, threw him from the room. He closed the door and stood waiting. There was a look on his face which told the attorney that he felt the exceptional part of the entertainment was now about to begin and he was prepared to enjoy the acting of the leading man.

But if Williams had any idea that he was going to note in his superior's manner the slow encroachment of that awkward self-consciousness which had made him feel like a fool in handling this case, he was doomed to disappointment. The attorney, with the increasing growth of understanding with Williams which he had been aware of for some months past, divined the thought in his mind, and dismissed him with unnecessary crispness.

"Wait outside, Williams," he said. He perceived with some irritation, however, that he was not the only one of the two who could divine the other's thoughts, for Williams, with just a shade of quizzicality in his open face—something unmistakably like the beginning of a wink—touched his cap and departed.

The attorney turned to the boy. "Now where did you get this pay warrant?"

"I found it on the deck."

"But you knew it wasn't yours."

"The man had gone when I picked it up. I looked for him and couldn't find him."

"Why didn't you turn it over to one of the officers of the transport?"

The boy was silent and batted his eyes rapidly. "I wanted to get home," he said at last. "I had a honin' to see my mother. And I didn't want to have to stay here until I saved enough to go home with. I was afraid if I couldn't find any work I'd have to enlist for three more years."

"Where do you come from?"

"Kentucky. My father has a blacksmith shop there."

"You had just got your discharge. You got your travel pay, didn't you? Where was it?"

The boy hesitated still longer. "I—I gambled with it on the boat and lost it all. I thought if I got home I could pay the money back some time. Besides, he'd gone, and I couldn't find him."

"But what excuse did you make to yourself for forging his name to the pay warrant?"

"I didn't," cried the boy quickly; "his name was on it."

The attorney took up the bit of paper. "Isn't this your writing?" he asked.

"No. The name was on it when I found it, I tell you."

"But even if it was, you passed yourself off for him at the pawnbroker's. Besides, here is his signature and, as you can see for yourself, it's not at all like the one you wrote. You didn't even try to imitate it."

"I didn't write it, I tell you!"

"Come over here and write your name," said the attorney impatiently.

The boy took up the pen with some assurance—this, it would appear, he had foreseen. He wrote in a laboriously sprawling and unsteady hand. Even a child might have seen that he was trying to disguise his writing and

pretending to be more unused to a pen than he really was. When he had finished, the attorney reached out and tore the sheet of paper off the pad. "Now write it again," he commanded.

The boy stole him a frightened look. "Again?"

The attorney nodded. The boy regarded helplessly the paper in the attorney's hand and fingered the pen and cleared his throat. Then he dipped the pen into the ink again and began even more slowly and sprawingly to write his name. He held out the paper, smiling a ghastly smile. "There!" he said. "I reckon it ain't just thataway. When you get to thinking about it, your pen wobbles."

The attorney took the second sheet. "Now write it again," he commanded.

The boy ran his eyes about the room, as though seeking some means of escape, and the pen trembled in his hand. He tried to steady it by putting both hands on it. His loose, wet mouth grew wetter and he drew in his lips to dry them. Then without a word he turned to the desk again and wrote for the third time, more painfully still, his signature.

The attorney compared the three. "Now look at them," he said. "And look here." He picked up the warrant. "Don't you see they're all like this one on the warrant? You tried to make the one you wrote for me as different as you could offhand, and the two others as near like it as you could remember, but you had forgotten just how you did it. Yet in spite of the flourishes, anybody could see that all four are written by the same person."

A groan seemed to be wrung involuntarily from the boy. Up to this time, contrary to what would have been expected from his appearance, he had not whined or broken down. Indeed, so far from seeming to be conscious of the extraordinary weakness of his position, he had preserved even in his moments of fright a loose-lipped, quavering smile, as if he were wondering what it was all about. The attorney was puzzled to know what was put on and what was genuine.

"Don't you see," he asked in irritation, "how stupid you were to deny that you wrote this man's name on this paper? Now listen. You have committed three crimes—grand larceny, forgery and uttering a forged instrument. Any one of these is good for ten years imprisonment, and you may possibly get thirty for all. Don't you see how foolish it is of you to keep on lying about it? Now, tell me the honest truth."

The boy stared at him with his watery blue eyes dilated to their fullest extent, so that the faded brows above them were peaked upward like two little thatched roofs. "Thirty years!" he repeated dully. "Thirty years!" He sank into the chair at the desk and throwing his arms upon it broke down into thin sobs.

Even in his sobbing there was something pitifully ridiculous—and gosling-like—thought the attorney; and the strings of sandy hair were absurd against the intense huckleberry blue of his sleeves. "Tell me the truth," he said quietly, when the sobs had gurgled away into gasps and were still at last.

The boy raised his head and sucked his lips dry. There were tears standing in the fuzz on his cheeks. "I had been over there three years," he said.

It was irrelevant, but the attorney had been curious to know.

"How did you happen to join the army?" he asked.

The boy thought a moment. "I dunno," he said. "The war broke out and we licked 'em and I kinder got excited, I guess. I wanted to hear the music. But there wasn't much out there, and army life's awful hard, and I was sick a good deal with the fever. And when I was comin' home, I played cards and lost my pay."

"You don't look like a fellow that would gamble away his money," put in the attorney, not ungently.

"I didn't want to," said the boy. "But they was all doing it and they laughed at me for stayin' out. And they just nacherly tormented me till I did it. And then I didn't know how

I could ever get home all the way to Kentucky, and I was afraid if I couldn't find any work, the first thing I'd be enlistin' again for another three years. And I thought my mother might die before the time was up. And now thirty years! She's bound to die in thirty years, I reckon. And I can't write to her or nothin' because she'd better think I'd forgotten all about her than know I'm in jail." He gulped hard for a few moments and then went on. "And the day we landed I found that pay warrant. Honest, I found it, just as I told you. But there warn't no signature on it. It was my bunkie's, and he was the man that made me play. And he won most of my money, and laughed at me, and said I warn't a good loser. And I thought I'd keep it a while and get even with him, so I put it in my pocket. And when it was in my pocket, I would keep feelin' to see if it was there, and supposin' it was mine, and I could go straight home. And I thought it might just as well be, because he had my money. And the more I thought the righter it seemed it oughter be mine. And I signed the name to it, and took it to the clothes shop and thought I would change it thataway. And I was just goin' to buy my ticket when they arrested me."

The boy was speaking quietly now and making no attempt to impress the attorney with his story or to heighten it in any way. His whole manner showed he was telling the simple truth. When he had finished, he sat still and stared at the floor. The attorney walked to the window and looked out into the street.

It was the toughest quarter of old San Francisco he was looking down into—the Barbary Coast of the San Francisco before the earthquake. Everywhere were sailors' saloons and joints and dance halls. All the flotsam and jetsam of a shifting sea world washed up there, and in its holes and hidings lurked men—and women—harpies who scuttled forth and preyed and picked and fought over the remnants of the sailors who landed jovially upon a

friendly shore and had a roaring time for a day and perhaps half the night if they were fortunate—and reeled back or were carried back the next morning, scraped clean of their three or six months' earnings as the case might be; or sometimes never came back at all and were rated as deserters or as "mysteriously disappeared" by the city force, if it so happened that the captains troubled to report the matter. It was a sodden, reeking street the attorney was looking down into, a depressing enough sight for any decent man's eyes and worse for those of a decent officer of the law—who looked down into it every day—even if he were only a United States Attorney and not responsible in his conscience for the city's filth; or even if he had not much conscience at all and in place of it only a keen ambition, a loyalty to the cause he was for the moment engaged in, and a determination to win the fight which a short-lived spasm of reform had made him champion for.

Certainly Madison's best friends would not have made the claim that he was a man with much sensitiveness of conscience—that might, indeed, have been one of the many reasons why they committed him to the cause he was standing for—nor any quixotism of feeling. But his best friends knew that he was clean handed, and could be relied upon to put through to the best of his excellent ability whatever he had pledged himself to do, and they knew that much of this excellent ability proceeded from his mechanical attitude toward his business and his thoroughly practical and unemotional way of going about it. Few of them would have given him credit for a recrudescence of the childish revolt against the inequalities of things, and he himself had long accepted the inequalities as part of the general scheme. But to Madison just now standing there at the window there seemed something insensate and monstrous in the law which winked at those harpies below, brazenly plying their obscene tasks which sometimes did not stop short of murder, and yet clutching, as in a vise, this shambling

lout of a boy sprawled in his desk chair and staring with his watery blue eyes at the floor.

Suddenly the lawyer walked to the door. The boy with a startled look hoisted himself to his feet. "You stay where you are," shot out Madison sharply, and the boy sat down again. "Williams," he called as he opened the door. Then he went out and closed it behind him.

The detective touched his cap, his face quite impassive.

"You say this fellow's record was good and he had an honorable discharge?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you think he found the pay warrant?"

"Yes, sir." Williams's tone did not even suggest triumph.

"What makes you think so?"

"He ain't got gumption enough to steal from a real live man!"

"He had enough to forge a signature."

"That was afterwards, and there wasn't nobody around." The officer waited a moment, and as nothing further came, his broad face took on once more the awkward look which sat so curiously on it. Even his feet began to shift again. "Say," he protested, "I'd feel like a fool having to get up in court and jug that lump of—"

"Yes, yes," retorted Madison, "I know all about that. But this thing isn't running just to give you a proper sense of your own dignity."

Williams regarded him good-naturedly. The attorney's irritability was conclusive proof that the boy had made others feel like a fool besides himself. As before, the moment there was anything like scrapping between the two, the slight flurry of embarrassment flitted from his face and it became once again coolly at ease. "No, I s'pose not," he said. "But we've got the goods, and a good scare would do the trick for him all right."

"I'll make a note of your opinion," said Madison, in that tone of scintillant sarcasm which had been his most telling weapon at the bar. But some way,

with that curious divination of Williams which had come to him an hour ago, he had a feeling that as a weapon, either of offense or defense, it totally miscarried here. "In the meantime," he added frigidly, being conscious that Williams had perceived this thought also, "you stay with your prisoner. I'm going to speak to the District Judge."

Williams grinned. "Say," he remarked abstractedly, "ain't it funny how them lumps o' nothin' make you feel like a monkey?"

Madison left the anteroom and walked down the hall. On the way he recollected that he had not locked his desk and his papers were spread upon it for Williams to see. "Never mind," he thought grimly, "there's nothing there he doesn't know already." His next move in the game was still to be thought out. And Williams was certainly the man who had checkmated every move so far. If he could only get at who was hiring him, or, better still, what Williams was doing it for! If it was money, he could be bought over. Or was it a sense of his own importance to the fight, and he had somewhat humanly gone to the side that estimated him highest? Or was it just love of fighting? In either case, he could get his fill on one side as well as the other. One thing was certain: he himself had been a fool in overlooking Williams altogether; and he knew now that he had a keen eye, a clever head and a very natural sense of his own value. "By Jove!" he concluded to himself, "I think I'll put out a feeler."

He knocked at one of the doors and went in. The judge was sitting at his desk. Madison had known him well for years, both as practicing attorney and friend. In the first capacity he knew him to be as stern and inflexible a man as ever sat on the bench; in the second he knew him to possess a kindly and even tender heart—the familiar paradox of the bulldog, Madison had always said to himself, outwardly ferocious and inwardly affectionate and even wistful wherever he felt his sympathies could rightly be placed. This

time he rather expected the judge would laugh at him.

"Judge," he said, "I've got an overgrown hulk of a boy in my room, about the complexion and consistency of a hank of hay—just a poor, driveling nonentity. I've a clear case against him, but I don't think he's a criminal. Now," he concluded after telling the story, "he's a soldier; and if I put it up to you as United States Attorney, it will have to go to the grand jury, and I can't stop it. After it's started, the law must take its course. What do you think? Am I justified in letting him go?"

The judge gave him a weary smile. "It's the old conundrum. I've tried to answer it every day for forty years. There are just two ways the law can turn a first offender into an habitual criminal. By letting him go and by jailing him. There's only one difference between the two that I can see—the second is more sure to do it than the first."

The judge had spoken in a gray voice and very slowly. Madison discerned that he had stumbled upon a moment of utter fatigue and dependency, and there followed an embarrassing silence. Then the judge got up and he, too, looked out of the window.

"Come here," he said. "You see that woman over there? Well, she's just like that woman over yonder. And they're all alike as a handful of peas, outside and inside. And they were all girls once and all different—different from each other and different from what they are now. And both this woman and that woman slinking along there are on the outside precisely like a woman I sent up this morning for the limit of the law—and they may be like her on the inside for all I know. And she, too, was a girl once, and a long time ago I tried to do something for her. She never forgot it, but it wasn't any use. She came into court again and again, and this morning I sentenced her for something worse than usually goes on in this street. What do you think she did? She laughed their fine, theatrical, horrible laugh and then she

said in a perfectly genuine way: 'Your Honor, you've always been a good friend of mine, and I never blamed *you* when you had to send me up, and I don't blame you now, when it will be for the rest of my miserable life. But I want to tell you one thing—if you'd let me go the first time, I wouldn't have been here the second.' I can see her face now, and I know perfectly well I shall always see it. And many, many others! And some of them doubtless could have said truthfully the same thing. For that woman was right."

The judge walked back to his desk and sat down. He looked at the wall for a few moments, while Madison stood ill at ease at the window, and then he rested his chin in the cup of his hands. "And many, many others!" he repeated listlessly. He raised the tips of his fingers to his eyes, hiding them for a moment, and his shoulders shook. "So you see," he said at last, "theories don't do any good, and you've still got your old conundrum. But the older I grow, the more I think we are severe. If you can save this boy, don't turn him into a criminal."

Madison laughed uncomfortably. He hardly knew how to make the transition into ordinary conversation. "There's no danger of that," he said. "He's too wishy-washy."

"Damn it, sir!" thundered the judge, slapping the desk with his open hand so suddenly that it made Madison start. "It's the wishy-washy ones that go quickest. What does it matter whether he's a successful criminal or not? He's ruined just the same!" The judge got up and in a second had returned to his customary speech. Madison had failed to reckon on the elasticity of temperament which alone could carry a man of his sensitiveness through such a daily routine. The judge's own flash in the pan had made the transition in which the attorney could not assist him, and the latter felt more comfortable.

"If he's the sort of boy you describe," the judge went on, "I should think he'd got his lesson by this time. What do you think?"

Madison hesitated. "Of course it's a gamble; still I think he ought to be let off. But I think he ought to be more seriously frightened. You see, he's been in the army and he's used to penalties for every evasion or transgression. Don't you think we ought to trim him up a bit?"

The judge laughed boyishly. "Well," he said, "suppose I sentence him for the civil court and you let him off as United States Attorney, having jurisdiction over the army? How's that?" he asked, his eyes twinkling. "That ought to be a good game."

"Just the thing," said Madison. "And make it sort of stiffish, you know. He's used to martial law, and I've already told him he could get thirty years."

"All right," assented the judge gaily. "Mind you, play up, now." And together the two walked along the hall and into the attorney's office.

Here they found the boy still sitting as Madison had left him, and Williams drumming on the table opposite. As the two men entered the room, the officer stood up in an official attitude. The boy gave the newcomer a frightened glance and rose quickly to his feet. It was odd to Madison to note how, in the presence of what he deemed from the detective's demeanor was his tribunal, the shambling, loose-jointedness dropped from the boy's limbs and he squared his feet and his shoulders and, saluting, stood to attention. On seeing the officer, the judge had exchanged a quick look with Madison, and then motioned Williams to leave the room.

"Prisoner at the bar," said Madison solemnly, "your case has been laid before the civil court by me, the representative of the United States Government. You have been guilty of sundry offenses, three in all—committed within the boundaries and jurisdiction of the city of San Francisco. You are now to receive from that court your sentence."

The judge transfixed the boy before him with his most inflexible judicial countenance. He was really thoroughly enjoying the occasion; at heart

he was young enough still to take part in any comedy with surprising zest, and that this was a salutary one made it the more acceptable. He reveled in pronouncing one of the few sentences he had ever pronounced with absolutely no misgivings as to its ultimate wisdom. "Prisoner at the bar," said he in his grave and orotund court delivery, "while nominally still amenable to the laws governing the United States Army, you have committed three weighty offenses against the common law of the Commonwealth of California in the jurisdiction of the city of San Francisco. By both laws you stand convicted on these three counts, and it is therefore fitting that you be regarded as amenable to the penalties of the infraction of either, at the will of this present court. Suspending the operation, therefore, of the law of the Commonwealth of California, I hereby condemn you according to military usage, to be committed to the military prison, and thence to be removed and shot at sundown."

"Your Honor," Madison was just beginning to remonstrate, playing the part assigned him in the little masquerade—when the boy, whose mouth had been hanging open during the judge's speech and gradually dropping lower as he took in the gravity of the words, his weak blue eyes fastened upon the judge's inflexible face, feebly saluted and let his hand fall dangling at his side. "God!" said he with a long sigh. "Then I'll never see my mother again!" And suddenly he slithered loosely to the floor in a dead faint.

The judge and the attorney for an instant of non-comprehension stared at each other over the boy's humped up figure. Then both leaped wildly away—Madison to the window, which he threw up with a bang, the judge to the desk, where he caught up the attorney's derby hat; and when Madison knelt to tear off the boy's choker and loosen his shirt, he found the judge fanning the white face violently. There was something ghastly in the transparent skin with its yellow fuzz and hanging mouth, something terribly

impotent in the huddled, loose body as it lay there so still.

"Williams!" called Madison sharply. The door flew open and Williams entered. He stood dumfounded at the strange picture of the judge fanning with the derby in long, scythe-like sweeps and mopping his own face rhythmically with the flat of his other hand, while the attorney kept chafing the boy's wrists in mechanical dabs and dodging the hat.

"For God's sake!" cried the judge, "don't stand there staring like a Chinaman, but get some whisky at once!"

When Williams returned on a gallop, still the boy had given no sign of consciousness. Madison took the bottle and rubbed some whisky on the boy's mouth, then, propping his limp head, he poured some of it down his throat.

"Put his head down, man!" snapped the judge. "Their heads should always be lower than their feet. Here, officer, hold his legs up!"

Williams gravely did as he was bid. But now the boy was coming out of his faint. He sighed, opened his eyes and looked with feeble wonder at them. Williams gravely deposited his legs on the floor, as if they were a bundle to be handled with care, while Madison poured some more whisky down his throat. "Here!" said he. "Don't speak; swallow that."

The boy continued to stare at them. Presently a dull flush began to mount into his face. "Ah!" said the judge, gratified. "His blood's coming back again. That's what makes people faint—the blood rushes down." The boy hitched slightly in Madison's arms. He moved his head from side to side, weaving it on his neck and gulping fast, while he smiled cavernously in an apologetic way. Finally he sat up, pushing Madison feebly aside. His smile dribbled into laughter. "Three cheers!" he cried with a faint cackle of sound. "To hell with Spain!"

The judge suspended his mowing with Madison's derby and sat down, solemnly scrutinizing the boy. "Why, he's *drunk!*" he said at last helplessly.

"We only wanted one thing more to make the job complete."

Madison fell back and set the bottle on the table. "Just that bit of whisky, and in a minute!" he expostulated in a dazed way.

Williams measured the bottle with his eyes. "I know what's the matter with him," he volunteered. "He's starving."

"See here, boy!" cried Madison quickly. "Are you hungry? Shut up that quacking, you—you gosling!" He took him by the shoulders and shook him sternly. At his touch the boy became quiet and looked at him with eyes comically arrested between drunken mirth and drunken tears. It was impossible not to laugh at him. Williams exploded in a bleat that cleared the air and made the judge join in. But Madison shook him again. "When did you eat last?" he said.

"Yes'ty mornin', cap'n," replied the boy thickly, making an attempt to salute. "Wasn't hungry 'n got off ship. No money till cashed pay. Goin' to eat when got ticket home. Kentucky, old Kaintuck! Hooray! An' you'll never see your Dolly any more." He babbled into tearful song.

"For heaven's sake, officer, get him something to eat, quick!" said the judge. "Here!" He emptied his pocket into his hand. "Here's two bits and a ten dollar bill. The two bits ought to be enough to settle his stomach and make him stop that infernal row. They say you oughtn't to give 'em much when they're starving. Milk's the thing. But bring something back at once."

"No!" interposed Madison firmly. "I've had enough of him! Take him away—anywhere you like!"

Williams looked at the judge in perplexity, but he issued no further orders. The officer scratched his head. "I can't take him along the street like that, Mr. Madison," he said seriously. "Then I'll *have* to jug him sure. About half a gallon of water'll fix him up. You see, he ain't got nothin' inside of him."

Madison ran his hands into his pock-

ets savagely, and, as he got no answer, Williams went for a pitcher. The judge drew the attorney aside. "See here," he said, "you can't feel anything like as much of a fool as I do, and you got me into this. He's got to stay here till—" he hesitated and regarded the attorney with a face struggling between shame and humor—"till you reverse the sentence of the civil court." Both men leaned up against the desk and laughed till the tears came, while the boy on the floor stared at them in bewilderment and babbled on.

Williams came back again with a wash pitcher full of water. "Here," he said, "shut up and drink this, and drink it all, or I'll kick the stuffin' out of you!" And he stood and watched the proceeding with a placid eye. Then he went to restore the pitcher and wisely knew enough not to return till he was sent for.

In about a quarter of an hour the liquor thus drowned lost its potency and the boy stopped babbling. During this interval the judge and Madison were both intently studying the empty wall in front of them, and the latter found it the most trying fifteen minutes he had ever gone through. Finally the boy sat still on the floor, his knees spread open and his hands lying loosely between them, his head hanging limply down.

Then the judge, perceiving that all was quiet, shifted his eyes from the spot on the wall and turned to the attorney. "I've played my part," he muttered with twitching lip. "And, God knows, I did it well. Now you play yours. And, mind you, you play up! I'm not going to be a fool for nothing."

The sheer physical pain of the moment that followed, the United States Attorney never forgot. His speech was the muscular effort of his life. Divided between laughter, tears and disgust at the ridiculous figure he was cutting, by a superhuman effort of the will he controlled his voice and the jerking corners of his mouth. "Prisoner at the bar—at the bar," he repeated tremulously, "stand up."

The boy hoisted himself uncertainly from the floor.

"By virtue of the power vested in me by the United States Government, I—that is—I, acting as United States Attorney—am superior to the decisions of any lesser and local court, provided the case has not gone by my entire consent to the grand jury convened before that court, and provided also that I see sufficient cause therefor, I am vested by the United States with the power to dismiss that case before it reaches the cognizance of said jury." Here his grandiloquent phraseology suddenly collapsed. "Can't you see, you fool, you're too much of an idiot to commit a crime? The moment you do, you come into competition with—" his voice faltered oddly—"with trained minds like policemen and ourselves. And we are too much for you. Now, I'll let you off this time, if you promise to make up the money for the clothes." He paused breathlessly, while the judge turned away and scrutinized the further corner.

The boy dropped on his knees and, crawling a step or two, slobbered and cried over the attorney's hand. The attorney drew it away quickly. "Get up!" he said sternly.

Mechanically the boy got up. "I promise!" he cried. "Just as soon as I can make it, I'll send you the money from home!" His face fell. "But I can't get home now, and I know I'll just nacherly be obliged to enlist again. I can't do nothin' in this here city."

The attorney paused a moment at this new complication. But he made up his mind instantly. "Williams," he called, going to the door and opening it.

"Yes, sir," said Williams, coming in and touching his hat.

"You take this fellow down to the station—"

"For heaven's sake see that he gets something to eat on the way," interpolated the judge.

Williams grinned. "Yes, sir," he answered.

"And buy his ticket for Kentucky," Madison went on. "Whatever place

he wants to go to. Here's the money." He took out his pocketbook and opened it. Then he cleared his throat. "How much is the ticket, boy?" he asked.

The boy was looking at him stupidly and had to be shaken by Williams before he seemed to comprehend. "Forty-seven dollars and eighty-four cents," he responded, bewildered.

Madison turned to the judge. "I find I've only got fifteen dollars here," he said. "I don't feel like running the risk of any more mix-ups, so if you don't mind lending me the rest—"

The judge squared his shoulders. "I've only got ten, sir," he said in an offended tone. "And I don't at all mind giving it to you, but *not* as a loan. Good Lord, Madison," he added hastily, "what are you talking about? I want to do my share!"

"Thank you," said Madison, gravely taking the outstretched ten.

"That makes twenty-five, sir," put in Williams. "I guess the police wants to come in on this," and he went down into his pocket.

"No, no!" cried Madison quickly.

But Williams had counted out twenty-five dollars. "That makes three dollars extra to see that he don't flop over on the way," he said. "And there's another five for his mother."

"Very well, Williams, thank you. I—I owe you then twenty-five dollars," said Madison as delicately but distinctly as he could.

"Good God, Madison!" said the judge,

"don't be proud. You've no reason to be."

Williams looked the attorney full in the face and grinned. "Well," said he, "just as you like about that, sir. But I'd like to come in on this—it would kind of keep us all together. It was me in the first place lassoed that huckleberry pudding there. I ought to pay something for that. Besides—" He canted his head on one side and stared at the attorney with impudent frankness. "Besides, I'm just rollin' in money. Money's nothin' to me. It ain't money I want."

Madison held the officer's eyes for a moment and something passed between the two men. Then he turned to the boy. "Well, clear out of here and get home," he said pleasantly. "And mind you keep your promise. Now go on," he added, giving the boy an ineffectual shove as he began again his fervent gratitude.

Williams passed the boy neatly and expeditiously out of the room. "Curious," he said behind his hand, "how them lumps o' nothin' make you feel like a fool. Say, men like you and me wants a stiff fight!"

Madison nodded good-humoredly. "When you see that cub on the train—and the train out of the station," he said, "you come back here, Williams, and we'll talk over what you want and I'll tell you what I want."

"Yes, sir," said Williams. And he touched his cap.



NOT AN AUTHORITY

JONES—Is your wife fond of the society of gentlemen?

BROWN—I asked her that question once and she said that without experience she could not say.

SUBJECT: MATRIMONY

By TOM MASSON

SUBJECT: Matrimony.

NEW YORK, August 16, 1908.

DEAR MADAM:

Pursuant to your request, as per our interview of the 11th inst., I write to inform you that I arrived safely at my apartment on the 13th.

In re our interview and kisses exchanged, I beg to inquire if you are open to a proposition. If so, kindly advise.

Yours very truly,

To J. S. ROBINSON.
Miss Ruth Plumpton,
1697 Pine Street,
St. Louis, Mo.

Subject: Indefinite.

ST. LOUIS, MO., August 19, 1908.

DEAR SIR:

I have your favor of the 16th, referring to kisses exchanged at Ocean Crest Hotel, rear piazza, night of the 8th inst. (memo filed in home office), also to a proposition which you desire to know if I will consider.

Please make your proposition more definite. I advise you to act promptly. Others in the field.

Yours truly,

To RUTH PLUMPTON.
Mr. J. S. Robinson,
96 W. 39th St.,
New York City.

Subject: A Proposition.

NEW YORK, August 21, 1908.

DEAR MADAM:

I hasten to reply to yours of the

19th. My proposition is that we be married in the autumn, date and church to be your own selection. I should prefer the ceremony to take place in New York City, for the reason that the already high cost of weddings would be augmented by transportation to and from St. Louis. My proposition remains open for one week.

Yours respectfully,

To J. S. ROBINSON.
Miss Ruth Plumpton,
St. Louis, Mo.

Subject: Indefinite.

ST. LOUIS, MO., August 24, 1908.

MR. J. S. ROBINSON,
NEW YORK CITY.

DEAR SIR:

Yours of the 21st duly received. Am greatly surprised at the un-businesslike tone of your letter, and if you will pardon my saying so, you must have been greatly rattled when you dictated it. Before accepting your proposition or any part of it, it will be necessary to go into detail much more fully than you have done. Please outline terms of partnership. Give route of wedding trip, with dates of sailing of principal steamers. State location of staterooms. Name weekly allowance, and amount to be regularly placed on deposit at my disposal. Also state nights you desire off, and what other absences, if any, during marital year. Name allowances for household expenses. Your business experience, from these suggestions, will doubtless aid you in giving me complete figures. Unless I hear from

you within five days, I shall open
negotiations elsewhere.

Yours truly,
To RUTH PLUMPTON.
J. S. Robinson,
New York City.

I am yours, body and soul, cash and
time. My terms are yours.

With a thousand and one kisses, in
feverish anxiety,

Your loving

JIM.

(Telegram)

Subject: Love.

NEW YORK, August 26, 1908.

DARLING RUTH:

Yours of the 24th just received. My
proposition is this: you can have
everything I've got, always and ever.

ST. LOUIS, MO., August 28, 1908.

9:30 A.M.

To J. S. ROBINSON,
96 W. 39th St., New York.

Terms accepted. Letter follows.

RUTH.



THE MIRROR OF LAIS

By THEODOSIA GARRISON

THEY brought me gifts of beaten gold,
Live jewels for my breast and head,
And curious cloths of fold on fold
Wrought with strange shapes of joy and dread.
Unto my door their pathways led
From war, from council and from sea;
Where are they now who wooed and sped?
Only the dead are true to me.

Bearded and resolute and bold,
What other sought they in my stead?
The cost of twenty cargoes sold
They scattered for my feet to tread.
Warring or wandering or wed,
This is the end of fealty,
For all the tears mine eyes have shed—
Only the dead are true to me.

The flaming hearts that in my hold
Lighted my youth like torches red,
Burned out have left me dark and cold.
Yea, I, to whom once princes plead,
From out the gloom uncomforted
Count what the years have left in fee—
The ashes of the oaths men said.
Only the dead are true to me.

L'ENVOI

Mirror, that once my garlanded
And golden youth held gloriously,
Must I turn thus to face my dead?
Only the dead are true to me.

THE GATHERING OF THE CLAN

By NALBRO BARTLEY

THERE was not one of the clan when they heard the rumor but refused offhand to believe it; then the rumor grew to be a good sized fact. The members of the clan would shrug their shoulders when the subject was whispered abroad and say, "Practical joke—and poor taste at that." But the damning evidence came to their notice in the form of a small three line item in the social column of the *Bulletin*, and upon this the clan rose up as one and decided that some action must be taken.

The society editor, Miss Newton, verified the statement to the Big Boss. "Why, yes," she said, when interviewed upon the subject, "yes, indeed, it's true. Roland came in himself and asked to have it inserted in both the daily and Sunday editions."

And at several and frequent periods during the next twenty-four hours the clan would withdraw to the rickety file room and read the same startling three lines: "Announcement is made of the engagement of Miss Kittie Mahoney and Mr. Roland Edwards. The marriage will be solemnized in the rectory of Saint Michael's Church on Thursday, August 12th. No cards."

There was no mistaking it—Roland Edwards and Kittie Mahoney, Kittie Mahoney and Roland Edwards. And the whole clan, from the Big Boss to Racy, the sporting editor, would feel hot under the collar and would turn about and face each other angrily, demanding feverishly: "How the hell did he ever get into the trap?"

If it had been anyone else except Roland Edwards, Roly Poly, as they had long dubbed him, the clan would

not have made a fight; if it had been the Big Boss or Racy or Farrell Knave, the news editor, or Scheff, the star reporter, or Billy the Kid or Brayton, the telegraph editor, the clan would have remained passive, but Roland Edwards—that whipped them into action!

Roly Poly had been on the *Bulletin* two years when he left to be the head of the advertising department of one of the big stores. The staff had hated to see him go. They liked his smooth, clean, clever style, his spicy news items written in so innocent a way as to make the wicked squirm and the virtuous applaud. They liked the boy himself, with his firm, warm handclasp, his honest, decent way of helping a fellow out of a nasty hole and his broad, tolerant attitude toward the world in general. To be sure, he was only a boy—twenty-five—and he had known but the rose-colored side of newspaper life. He had come into a host of friends and had never stirred from without their realm. But the boyish, yet strangely matured, attitude of the chap had made them respect him, even as they did the Big Boss, who, before he became managing editor, had lived with the members of the underworld and had straggled into the office with fake stories night after night until he married a rich widow and . . .

The staff had watched Roland's work with interest. Racy, the sporting editor, had put up bets that Roly Poly would quit the advertising business before the year was out, and Scheff, the star reporter and the father of six, had toiled up the stairs of the department store to Roland's office more than once

a week to find out if he needed any tips on the lay of the business world.

Sometimes between men, and always between newspaper men, there is a certain bond of good fellowship which the outer world cannot fathom. There is something in taking breakfast with a man at three or four in the morning that lends an enchantment to the scene—something more than a business man's lunch at twelve-thirty with a neighboring bookkeeper; in the Bohemian, roving, half-mysterious life of the free lance, there is an equally mysterious fraternity. Sometimes one is not initiated at the outset. Sometimes one is taken instantly into the midst and held there forever. There is a something in lending a man money when you have to beg for a breakfast yourself; in taking a fellow home after a staff breakfast and scolding him seriously by the light of the rising sun for imbibing too much of the rosy fluid and then finding that you yourself cannot walk straight and have to be taken to a Turkish bath. There is something in helping your side partner get a "scoop," in getting one yourself and hearing the fellows say, "Good for you!" and then going out for a good time and shaking hands triumphantly with the members of the rival staff; in election times, when the outside world is agog with excitement and the office is in a turmoil, fairly reeking with knowledge; in working on a crime case; in the thousand and one things which the meek and conventional humans can never know—it is a fellowship as old as the hills and as unbreakable as the power of the press itself.

That is why the clan decided to interfere in Roland's affairs, and that is why they did. Even when he had left them and had stopped wearing a green derby and a red tie and saying: "I'm Edwards of the *Bulletin*.—Got any news?—Why, yes, a drink wouldn't be bad while I'm waiting. Thanks, awfully," the staff loved Edwards and took a real interest in him.

Racy was right: Edwards did leave the advertising business, and it wasn't six months after the bet had been

made. The staff rubbed their hands in approval when Roly Poly bounded into the office and sat on the city room table and swung his legs and said, "I've been appointed the Mayor's secretary. How about it?" The Big Boss lumbered out from his sanctum and put his hand on the lad's shoulder.

"You're getting back among us," he said approvingly. "It will be politics next—Roly Poly, I like it." And the rest of the clan followed in hilarious congratulations, while the cub reporters looked up from their desks and wondered if they would ever dare to call the Big Boss by his first name or tweak the news editor's ear.

The night of his appointment they had a gabfest in the sporting editor's room. The printer's devils ran around the corner for club sandwiches and the wine flowed freely, and Scheff recited an original poem until Farrell Knave stopped him by feeding him peach tarts, and Billy the Kid and Brayton did an impromptu Salome dance.

Then Roland settled down to work in earnest. After a few weeks he began to go in for the social end of the job and wear clean collars and smoke long, black Havanas, and he passed the clan by in somewhat of a hurry and made the reporters from the *Bulletin* wait in the Mayor's outer office until it was too late to get a story, and the clan spoke of him as one gone on ahead and the gabfests were ended.

Roland had learned to like being asked to the Mayor's house for dinner, and he rejoiced in an array of forks and was seen in a box party at the Charity Ball and the Opera. He had a brave line of correct vests and neckties now, and hats and storm ulsters and overcoats galore. He was getting a bit heavier and there was a suggestion of a line across his once boyish looking forehead.

It was nearly morning in the Pekin, the café much frequented by the clan, and while the Big Boss dozed contentedly in his chair Brayton and Billy the Kid began to talk of the boy.

"He's gone ahead," said Billy the Kid gloomily. "He's gone ahead like none of the rest of us devils ever can; he's the only one of the bunch that will have memorial exercises for some poor young cub to splurge over. Funny idea, isn't it—sending out some reporter to do the memorial exercises of Mr. Roland Edwards!"

Brayton reached for his stein. "I lead a jolly life, yo, ho!" he said drowsily. "Roland's gone on some—no doubt of it. Saw him with the Mayor's wife and sister again. Wouldn't wonder if . . ." But the stein forestalled any prophetic remarks.

During his first few days in the City Hall Roland paced the length of the corridors like a caged lion; he gazed mournfully at the array of long, clean desks, the shiny tops of the bookcases and safes, the green electric light shades, the great letter files and the polished windows with their trim shutters. A wild, primitive love for the old haunts swept over him; he longed to dash into his thin blue serge suit, his green derby and red necktie, get a gob of fresh copy paper and stand languidly about the dingy city room betting with the boys until Farrell Knave would say: "Damn you, Edwards, get out and get some copy! We're short for stuff and the paper's fourteen pages tomorrow!"

And while the rest of the troupe would be meekly trailing forth to cover exhibitions, dull religious meetings or routine happenings, he would take an East Side car down to the heart of the Tenderloin and mingle among his friends, and then there would be a double head on the first page the next morning, and perhaps the Big Boss would take him out to breakfast and argue seriously as to the truth of the reincarnation theory and the awful futility of trying to make women ever stop wearing long skirts on bargain days.

But the old days were gone, and Roland would look at his immaculate attire and shake himself briskly and say that he must stop being soft and thank his lucky stars that he pulled

out of the business before he became a fixture like the Big Boss or Scheff or Billy the Kid or Racy; and he would swing back into his office with a determined air and make his stenographer clutch her Elizabethan ruff in terror lest she make a mistake.

It does not take long to break up associations after the process has once been thoroughly started, and between bullying the Mayor and flattering his wife and her ancient sister, who adored bridge with Roland for a partner, the clan was forgotten, and the boy began to get a grip on things municipal and to work in earnest.

Then came the crashing thunderbolt—his engagement to Kittie Mahoney; and it was then that the clan decided that some action must be taken. For Kittie Mahoney was none other than a pretty, tempting, but flamboyant bit of Irish beauty, who could scarcely write a correct letter, and who was stenographer to one of the park commissioners. The City Hall was filled with such bits of temptation, and it had once been jokingly suggested to the Mayor by an impudent reporter that he write an article on "Our American Harem—Are the Turkish Women Allowed More Liberty than the Devotees of the City Hall?" And the Mayor had offered the young man a cigar and told him that he would make his mark in the world some day—which was really a false prophecy, for the reporter had been none other than Billy the Kid.

The clan all knew Kittie Mahoney—Kittie, with her large, childish blue eyes, her golden curls, her tilting, freckled nose and rosy, kissable mouth, her wee suggestion of brogue and her dimples and her white, even teeth. Many were the suppers which the clan had collectively and individually bought for the benefit of Miss Kittie Mahoney.

But that had been before the time of Roland Edwards. During his term on the paper Kittie had been away from the city, and after an absence of three years she reappeared and slipped into her old place in the City Hall beside the gay park commissioner and smiled and

dimpled at the men as of yore. Roland had recently left the *Bulletin* and was plunging into the advertising business.

Then the engagement was announced and the society editor verified it and the clan decided to hold an indignation meeting for old time's sake.

"It's for the boy's good," said Farrell Knave to the Big Boss; "that's what it's for. In the file room after the paper goes to sleep."

The file room, reeking with the smell of stale tobacco and musty paper, was but poorly lighted as the six men gathered within its dinginess, and Henry, the janitor, was allowed to keep watch at the door.

The Big Boss presided, not because he wanted to, but because Racy beat him over the head with a bunch of exchanges until he lumbered up on top of the files of the early seventies and called the meeting to order.

"Men," he said confusedly, "we're here—we're here—that is, we have assembled to protest against Roly Poly marrying Kittie Mahoney. That is why we are here—and I don't know a damn thing to do about it," he concluded pathetically.

Farrell Knave raised himself lazily into the center of the expectant group and took the floor. "Neither do we," he said tersely. "That's why we're here. It's a thankless job telling a man that the woman he loves isn't all she should be. There is only one way to do it, boys, and that's to tell the whole truth. We all know Kittie and we've got to tell the old chap that we've— It's a raw thing to do, fellows," and the usually aggressive Knave sat down hopelessly.

It was Racy's time to talk, and he stood up, buttoning and unbuttoning his striped vest nervously. "Say, cut out the sentiment," he said doggedly; "take the facts: she's—well, she's not what she should be to be Roland's wife, and she never will be. She's fooled him with her baby ways the same way she used to fool many a beefsteak and bottle out of you and me. We've got to tell him this and it'll hurt and he'll be damn sore at us for some time

to come. He thinks he's gotten away from the old crowd and all the good old times. He thinks he's made a decent start and he's a bit ashamed of all that's gone before. And this woman has fooled him. Fellows, Roly Poly's only a baby kid compared to us—he's the youngest one of us and we love him; we're for him every time. If he marries this woman it's nix for success and he'll be peddling hot dogs before the first kid comes. Fellows, get your sporting blood up; get your nerve to where it's shaking hands with you; make— Say, get me a drink—" and amidst cheers the sporting editor sank back into the arms of Farrell Knave.

Scheff, the star reporter and the father of six, and incidentally the boy who began as a typesetter, took the floor. His brown eyes seemed to be looking away off and his hands were clenched. "I don't know Kittie like the rest of you fellows do—I never wanted to—but have any of you thought of her? There's always two sides, boys, and perhaps she's made a fresh break. Perhaps she's gone on the boy and loves him and has made him respect her and shown him her true self and all that, and is going—"

The clan drowned his sentence with "Rot! Start again, nothing! She's what she is and she never can—"

But Scheff continued doggedly: "I say I'm sorry for the girl. Her life won't bear a magnifying glass, I know, and neither will Roland's life nor any other man's in some respects, and it's going to hurt her, too. And if he loves her, it's going to hurt him, and he's going to hate us for it for a long time to come, and so is she, and I don't blame them. I'm a married man—and I tell you, boys, there's a certain something in a man's knowing that one particular woman loves and trusts and cares for him; that she worries and hopes and prays for him; that she is everything that is good and fresh and true—everything that perhaps he has lost and wants in his life—it's his salvation. Sometimes I think that's what makes us fellows marry the decent women. And to take that away from a man—to sweep

it out of his life without mercy—boys, I tell you what—it's a knockout." And Scheff sat down mopping his forehead feverishly.

The Big Boss looked at Billy the Kid, who responded with a sardonic grin. "That comes of having a large family," remarked the Big Boss.

Billy the Kid rose from his corner and began to talk. "All that I have to say is that I am sorry for them both. But we have got to save Edwards. We all know, personally, what this woman's life is or was. As for making a fresh start, that doesn't matter. The Big Boss ought to know—he's taken her to New York more than once—so has Knave—and we have the delicious and tempting task of telling Edwards all about it now—like the heroes do in story books, and he'll probably knock us down and black our eyes and tell us to go to hell, and he wouldn't be much of a man if he didn't. But she isn't the woman to marry Roly Poly—" Here Billy the Kid collapsed.

Brayton stood up excitedly. "It all levels down to this: we have called a meeting to tell Roland frankly that the woman he loves isn't worth his respect. And we are all agreed that it will be the ruination of his political career and future happiness and self-respect and his every chance in life if he did happen to marry her. How they ever got to the engagement stage, we don't know. That is not what we are interested in. We, as a body, must tell Edwards the truth. He'll believe us—at least, he will be so sore that he'll put the facts up to her, and if she can hedge and deny them—then, fellows, we've done all we can! Now what we want to do is to draw lots as to who'll be the spokesmen, and then, let's get a wagon and drive to the boy's place and tell him tonight."

There was a pause and the Big Boss said in a quiet manner, "We will."

The dim light of the dusty electric globes made the figures of the men seem a bit distorted as they drew the bits of copy paper which Henry held in his grimy hands. It was a barbaric

thing to do—to tell on her—and they had all had such good times together once. But it was Roland's future at stake, even if she was a good fellow, and they were men and the bond of fellowship was as strong as if he were one of them now. He had long since withdrawn from their circle and had shunned them persistently, but they loved him and they were going to save him now.

The men looked at the slips eagerly—it was between the Big Boss and Scheff. "I won't do it," each said simultaneously.

"You've got to," flashed back the others.

It was a hot night—one of the dry, parching, awful nights which make your voice tired if you go farther than a block without a drink and your eyes ache to look at the suggestion of a bright light. The carriage was a roomy one, but six desperate men, six frightened and cowardly men on a parching summer's night, going to tell a man that the girl he loved wasn't fit to marry—it made a rather bulky burden.

The carriage drove off briskly. "Drive fast," whispered the Big Boss to the driver. The horses dashed ahead.

"Slow down, damn you!" said Farrell Knave; "we'll be there if we aren't careful." A foolish giggle met this remark.

Then the wagon stopped and the clan piled out for drinks and grasped each other's hand in token of keeping up their nerve, and piled in again and drove off and stopped again, and the Big Boss was beginning to lose his power of speech as he pictured Roland's eyes, and Scheff wondered if his kids would always say their prayers at night or if they would stop when they were half grown up, and then Farrell began to remember the days when he and Kittie used to slip off for the last act or so of a matinee.

The carriage stopped suddenly outside of the neat apartment house with an ominous creak. There was a long and awful pause. No one stirred.

The clan looked at each other in the dark, then Billy the Kid's mind wandered back to the old school days in the rigid New England town years ago, and he began to sing an old hymn in a high, mournful, falsetto voice. The others joined in and for a few minutes strange sounds floated upon the early morning air while the clan held hands inside and shouted lustily.

"It gets your nerve up," said Knave huskily. "Let's try another."

Again an awkward pause. Then Racy started in a minor key, "We Need Thee Every Hour," the Big Boss humming a mellow bass approvingly. The driver coughed on his box, the horses stamped and a stray passerby hurried on. "We need Thee, oh, we need Thee," chanted the clan, "every hour we need Thee"—and once more the melody trailed off into a thin, dismal humming.

"Your number, gentlemen," said the driver timidly. He had not approved of the conversation on the way over.

"Get out, you blamed idiot!" said Racy to the Big Boss. "There's a light in the window on the fourth floor."

"I—I can't," stuttered the Big Boss peevishly, his collar wilted to a rag and the perspiration rolling off him.

"Get out," said Farrell Knave to Scheff, while Billy the Kid kicked him brutally.

"Get out," said Brayton with determination in his usually weak voice.

Then there was another pause. "I can't do it, fellows," said the Big Boss; "honest to heaven, I wish I could—but I can't—I simply can't do it, fellows—it's no use—we'll have to write him."

"Get out," said Racy, opening the door; "get out!"

"Let's all do it," suggested Scheff. "I mean—will you fellows come upstairs with us—will you just come into the room and be there when we are telling the boy—just be there—fellows. God, but it's hot! Come on, pals, just come up—"

Racy pushed his way out, followed by Billy the Kid and Brayton. Farrell

Knave pushed the Big Boss and Scheff into close collision with the curb and told the driver to wait. Then there was a dead halt. The Big Boss turned to the driver and gave a direction in a low voice. The carriage drove off briskly.

Racy braced up, threw his head back and went up the steps. The rest followed nervously. They rang the bell, their faces dripping with perspiration and their knees trembling.

"Yes?" floated down in Roland's even, well modulated voice.

"Hell, boy, it's the clan," said Racy lightly.

"Oh!" There was a pause. "Come up," said the voice warmly.

"He says to come up," said Racy in a stage whisper.

"Well, go up, you fool!" said Scheff.

Up, up, up the four flights of stairs went six heavy, draggy pairs of feet. Then a turn, and in the doorway of the snug apartment, in linen smoking jacket and slippers and with outstretched hands, stood the boy.

"I say, boys, this is like old times," he began in the impulsive, eager manner that made the look of pride leap into their faces. "And it is awfully decent of you to come in a bunch on a night like this. Come in, bless your old hearts, and we'll make a time of it. What's been doing—you look as if you were giving the bluejackets a chase!"

"No," said the Big Boss solemnly.

Then Knave giggled awkwardly, while the rest maintained a discreet silence. They sat on the roomy leather chairs and the great wide couch ill at ease. They gazed at the etchings and the rugs and the bits of brass and the piano and the velvet hangings in awe. They preferred to sit on chairs minus a leg and thump notched and dirty tables emphatically and deposit their cigar ashes on the floor at their will. Meanwhile the boy was hustling about getting delicious cool things to drink in tall, thin tumblers, and Racy pointed silently at the long row of photographs of Kittie over the writing table and the almost life size head of her on the piano.

"The chap's come up in the world," said Racy nervously as he took off his cuffs and placed them on the piano. "Get wise to the one rose in the vase beside her picture."

The Big Boss kicked off his shoes and lay down full length on the divan. "Oh, Holy Saint Patrick!" he moaned. "And we've got to—"

"Boys," said Roland, after he had hugged them individually and asked for news, "I've been a bit of a beast concerning you, and I know it. But things have changed so that it seemed as if you had sort o' gone out of my life. It wasn't that I felt any the less for you—only we didn't happen to meet as often. I ought to have told you about Kittie before I let the announcement come out, but somehow it was so good and precious that I couldn't let any of you know about it. I hugged it to myself until the very last minute." There was a pause, and the clan looked at the boy as they noted that his eyes softened and turned in the direction of the frivolous golden head of the girl on the piano. Then his look turned back to them and he went on: "Of course, you must feel a bit sore about it, and I don't blame you, boys, but, well—you've all been there and you know what it feels like, and if you haven't been there—there's a lot in store for you. I know you've come up here to congratulate me, and I think it's jolly white of every one of you—and Kittie would say the same, good old scouts. Kittie—if you only knew her—if you— Fellows, it isn't very often I get balled up with sentiment, but I give you my word, this has touched me more than anything else in the world."

He held out his hands as he finished, his brown curls a bit tossed and his eyes larger and more serious than they had ever remembered them. He was waiting for their congratulations and they had come to tell him—

"Come on, old chaps, don't be ashamed to guy me—the more you do the better I like it—she's the dearest girl in the world."

But the clan did not move and the

boy's hands dropped at his side and he looked at them in a puzzled sort of way.

"What's the new dodge?" he asked affectionately.

The Big Boss had drawn one of the lots, be it remembered, and the Big Boss loved the boy. He had been yellow up to now—when he stood before the boy. His face was white and his hands were working nervously. But the Big Boss had it in him, and his time for action had come.

"Roland," he began gravely in his preacher voice. Only once before had the clan ever heard the Big Boss use that voice, and that was the night Scheff's first baby died and the Big Boss had had to tell him. "Roland, we love you—we know you've kept away from us and that in a certain sense we are out of your life. But not altogether. You can't shut us out altogether, boy. We've loved and watched and hoped for you, and we're going to keep right on doing it. You'll hate me before I'm through; you'll hate every one of us, too—and then, some day, you will realize that we were right, and you'll thank us for what we are going to do. Roland, a man can't prevent what comes into his life—but after it is in he can grapple with it and push it back. That is what you have got to do with this woman—listen, hear me out—you have got to put her out of your life, even though it hurts you at the time. She isn't what you think she is, boy; she is anything but that. We all know her, we boys; we have all—I—I took her to New York eight years ago when she was a slip of a girl—listen: Racy knows her, Farrell, Billy, Brayton, Scheff—and when we knew that you were going to marry her, we held an indignation meeting to decide to come and tell you the truth. She's a clever little girl and there was good stuff in her once, but she isn't fit for any man to marry now and you've got to break it off!" A crystal vase smashed as the Big Boss brought his hand down on the piano and a glow of pride for him was in the hearts of the clan.

The boy's face was white. "If this is a joke," he said between clenched

teeth, "it is the beastliest, most contemptible piece of work I have ever listened to, and I ask you to go. And if—it—"

"It's the truth," said the clan as one.

"You lie!" flashed back the other.

"No, we don't," spoke up Racy; "she's been at the track too often—ask her—ask her."

"I'm a gentleman," said the boy lamely; there were tears in his voice.

"Ask her about me," said Billy the Kid; "ask her about Brayton or Knave—Jove, ask her about Knave! She's trapped you—"

"Stop!" The boy was suffering. With anxious eyes, the clan watched him as he walked over to the piano and took the large cabinet photo in his hands. "Tell me," he said brokenly to the dancing blue eyes and the lovable mouth, "Kittie, Kittie, are you what they say? Oh, you're not—you're not, and I won't listen to them, dear. They are a pack of miserable, low-down curs—a pack of liars—and I won't believe them—" The boy buried his head on the piano and sobbed.

The Big Boss put his arm on the boy's shoulders. "Listen, Roland," he said again in the same steady tones, so foreign to his usual grunts of affirmation or otherwise; "we have told you this because it was best for you. It hasn't been an easy thing for any of us—think it over. Would you be in our places? We have come halfway—and you've got to put the facts up to her!"

The boy raised his flushed face defiantly. "I love her," he shot back, "and she's going to be my wife."

"Suppose the things we have accused her of were true?" asked Knave cautiously. "What then?"

Roland let the picture fall with a gesture of disgust.

"Of course," he said in an uneven tone, "if I knew that she—had been all you say—but it isn't so," he concluded fiercely. "I tell you it isn't so."

"Ask her," came a grim chorus of voices.

It was after three o'clock and the strain was beginning to tell. The sound of a returning carriage, which

stopped in front of the door, made them start. Then the electric bell rang furiously. Roland started to answer it.

"Yes—Kittie—what does this—yes, dear, I'm all right. Come up—I don't understand—"

"I sent for her," interrupted the Big Boss. "I want you to ask her if what we have said is true."

"You dared to send for her—"

"I dared to send for her," answered the Big Boss.

The men looked at each other curiously. It was like one of the melodramas they so loved to hiss.

The girl's footsteps sounded lightly outside.

Roland let her in with a nervous jerkiness of manner. He put his arm about her and led her to the little inside den. The men remained silent. They could hear them talking in low, excited tones, and once they heard her cry out loud, and then the voices sank to a whisper.

It seemed a long time before the boy appeared in the doorway. His eyes were not pleasant to look at as he said grimly, "It's all a lie—she denies it. Will you please go?"

The Big Boss stood up—he had put on his shoes and readjusted his remnant of a tie. "I want to see her."

"You sha'n't speak to her."

"I am going to see her," repeated the Big Boss. The boy's chin was quivering and his eyes were pleading.

"Ah, boy," said the Big Boss, "you're trying hard to hold your ideal of her, aren't you? But you've got to give it up—I tell you, you've got to give it up!" The Big Boss pushed his way into the little den. Then he shut and locked the door while the clan and the boy fought it out together.

The girl rose when he entered. She was a pretty girl, only there were dark circles under her eyes, but her dress of pale blue suited her well. "You," she said; "you!"

The Big Boss looked at her and her cheeks grew red.

"So you came," he said slowly; "you came and denied it."

"I came," she said proudly, "and I told the man I love that it was all a lie. I tell you now that you can't make me give him up. You're a fine lot to try and put me down and out! Haven't you got a grain of mercy in you? I came and I denied it."

The Big Boss looked at her for a long time without speaking. "We've had some pretty good times together, Kittie, you and I. But they are all over now. If you had been a different sort, you would not have been able to keep your head up as long as this. But, you see, you were never meant to be bad, and that's why. You would have made a splendid woman—if you had had half a chance. Now I'm not blaming you for being engaged to Roland, and I congratulate you from the start on being clever enough to catch him. But you are not going to marry him. Not this one. I'd make as big a fight if you were a different sort of a girl and he was a vicious man—I'd do even more. I'm not going to buy you off—I'm going to talk you out of it. If you really love him, you will tell him the truth and run back to your merry typewriter and jaunty park commissioner and let this boy alone. Kittie, you haven't a right to touch his life—to kill his success—you're not fit to. I helped make you what you are, and now I'm pushing you away from your one chance to start even. It's a damn shame, but it's life and I'm going to do it. Look here, Kittie, ain't I right?"

The woman gave him a fleeting glance. "Oh, yes," she said, "the game is up. What do you want me to do?"

"Go in there and tell the boy the truth—tell him the truth."

"And finish the night with the clan at the Pekin?" she asked bitterly. "Haven't you ever thought that I might want to start over again, that I didn't really choose this life because—don't you think I can ever love a man?"

"But not a clean-minded, healthy, unspoiled boy," he retorted.

"But he doesn't believe you," she said triumphantly. "He doesn't believe you. It all rests with me, *me!*"

"I know that," said the Big Boss gently, "but you are going to tell him. You will quit the game squarely—I'm not afraid of that."

"A man and a woman—what a lot of tangles that combination can make!" said the girl wearily, letting her head fall back on her shoulders.

"An awful heap," assented the Big Boss. "Coming?"

"Some time he will marry someone else, I suppose," she said vaguely.

"I hope so," said the Big Boss mercifully. "Coming?"

The woman played listlessly with the fringe of her sash. "I love him," she said hopelessly. "He is the only man I ever really did love—and now you've come in and dug up all the ugly skeletons of the past and—you've put me down and out."

"I know it," said the Big Boss, "and I hated—"

"He must hate you," said the woman.

"He does," said the Big Boss soothingly. "Coming?"

"Are the boys all there?" said the girl, her eyes grown large and black.

"Every one of them."

"It isn't fair to make me face them."

"Look here," said the Big Boss, "we'll go home—we'll go home and you can tell him after we are gone. Just you two—and it will be for the last time. I trust you that much. We will go home and then you can tell him. Be game, Kittie."

"All right," said the woman. Her voice was hoarse. "Say, you are an odd lot—you newspaper chaps. You did a nervy thing to come here—so did I—that's the way we have always done things, isn't it? It was clever of you to send for me—to have it all fought out here." There was a slight noise outside the room and the Big Boss heard Billy the Kid say something in his high tones. Brayton quieted them instantly.

"Good-bye, Kittie," he said simply. "You've got the real stuff in you; good-bye."

Roland faced him with a look of hatred. "Well?" he questioned. The clan rose to their feet.

"Come on, boys," said the Big Boss. "Roland, old chap, she'll tell you herself."

Silently, shamefacedly, the men stole out of the room—the boy watching them with a half-dazed expression. Down the stairs, into the dusty carriage, not a word was spoken.

Away into the darkness they were driven, the faint approach of the dawn beckoning them toward the Pekin. "Hell!" said the Big Boss. And the men assented.

In the meantime the boy had opened the door into the den and the woman had crept into his arms with a tired gesture.

"It is all true," she said. "It is all true—all true—all true! Good-bye, dear, and forgive me if you can. They were brave pals to tell you, and you were a brave lover to refuse to listen—but it's all true—"

"Kittie," the boy's face was a shining white, "not—not all that they said—"

"All," said the girl monotonously, "every bit."

The boy looked at the tired head on his shoulder.

"Let's be married soon," he said brusquely.

The girl looked at him in a frightened way. "Good-bye, Roland. Dear, has it made you forget—don't you remember—you have just learned that I am bad, bad, bad, unfit to touch, a menace to your career. The clan, the newspaper clan, the boys that know and love you, have just come to you and told you, and the Big Boss has been talking to me, and I promised him that I would tell you the truth and I have—oh, God, I have! It's all true—every bit of it—and I'm going away—I'm going away—"

"No, you're not," said the boy, with a look of savage possession in his face. "You are going to start all over again—as my wife."

Gone is your power, you faithful

clan, gone, never to return. Your hopes and fears and your clumsy try at saving the boy are futile when pitted against the flicker of her eyelash and the look of love in her Irish blue eyes! The old, old story.

The clan were driving away to the Pekin, the look of victory in their faces—but at what a cost!

The society column two days later announced that the marriage of Mr. Roland Edwards and Miss Kittie Mahoney had been quietly solemnized at Saint Michael's rectory the morning previous, and that Mr. and Mrs. Edwards had left immediately for the West to make their home.

Once more the clan gathered about the supper table at the Pekin. There was a long pause and the Big Boss crumpled his menu card in his hand. "He's gone," he said finally. "I sent him a box of cigars and my blessing."

"I sent a basket of flowers to Mrs. Edwards," said Billy the Kid.

"So did I," echoed Racy and Knave.

"I sent her a letter," said Brayton, "wishing her every joy. Perhaps she'll have it—who knows?"

"I sent her a box of candy," said Scheff, digging the tablecloth with his fork. "Roly Poly—what a lot of blunderers!"

There was another pause. The clan felt strangely humiliated. After all, what good does it do to interfere with a man and his chosen? As in the days of the cave dwellers, when the savage fancied the plump little daughter of a neighboring chieftain and knocked her affectionately over the head with his bludgeon until she was sufficiently stunned to drag her to his own realm and live happy ever after—who could interfere? Who dared interfere?

"Did you send her any word?" asked Billy the Kid of the Big Boss a little later.

"Yes," said the Big Boss soberly, "an apology."



GREEN CHARTREUSE

By FREDERIC TABER COOPER

THROUGH the December gloom of shabby cross streets Carnochan's tall, wiry frame gathered impetus as the bright lure of the Hotel Alouette gleamed nearer through the flurrying snow. Rounding the corner of University Place, he sprang up the familiar steps, in a tingle of expectancy that was almost pain. Thronging associations wrenched oddly at his heart with each swinging stride down the long hall, flamboyant with French posters, past the open door of the café, with its soft tinkle of many glasses, to the blatant red and gold of the reception room. He was so certain that his guests awaited him that he entered with extended hand. But his glance, completing a fruitless circuit of the room, noted as it came to rest upon the pompous gilt clock before the mirror that his impatience had goaded him hither a quarter of an hour ahead of time.

As he surrendered hat and coat, already mottled by the thawing flakes, and took the check indifferently thrust upon him, this trivial, customary act gave him the shock of an awakening. The sense of strangeness and unreality, which ever since his early morning arrival in the city had hung upon him like a heavy fog, began suddenly to lift and melt away. The intervening years, with their tale of poverty and non-achievement, shrank to a mere blur. It seemed but yesterday since he last was here, passing hat and coat over the selfsame counter, receiving, it might be, the selfsame square of tarnished brass. And because of this foreshortening in time, the ignominy of that last day in New York, the day

of estrangement, the day on which he first lost faith in himself, stood out in sudden, relentless nearness. The folly of his eagerness tonight loomed up colossal. Juggle as he would with facts, what else was it than grotesque, inordinate presumption for a rolling stone, a vagabond, a failure such as he, to be spending his last ten dollars on a dinner to the uncle who five years ago had disinherited him, the cousin who had given back his ring?

Through the doorway and inside windows of the main dining room came the confused hum of many voices, the discreet clicking of plates and drawing of corks, all merging in the remoter rhythm of a popular waltz. The waiting room itself was alive with the stir of new arrivals, of eager greetings and the onward passage, by twos and threes and half-dozens, to tables held in reserve. The impotent fumings of a man and woman, who had neglected to telephone in advance and must now wait for a vacancy, suddenly aroused in Carnochan a sense of his own remissness. He had been so long away that he had grown out of touch with the little customs and observances that once had been instinctive, almost automatic. This dinner tonight, like everything else to which he laid his hand, was foredoomed to failure. But the smug head waiter, spying him from the room beyond, came forward and, to Carnochan's wonderment, greeted him by name, with that intangible degree of deference which denotes the favored guest. How many friends was Mr. Carnochan expecting? Only two? Ah, well, in that case there would be no difficulty; there was just one table for

three still unengaged, at the farther end of the inner room, neither too near nor too far from the music. Would Mr. Carnochan take the *table d'hôte*, or would he prefer to order now from the card?

In the old days Carnochan had been a frequent patron of the Hotel Alouette, but he had long since ceased to look for obsequiousness from autocratic waiters. As he awkwardly formulated his modest order, a nervous doubt suddenly invaded him of his outward presentability, a fear lest the creases, born of long storage, and the redolence of camphor still clung to the evening clothes he had just unearthed from the attic of his old-time lodging house. He glanced apprehensively into the opposite mirror, only to note that the coat hung somewhat redundantly upon the spare frame, from which toil and illness in tropic lands had removed every needless ounce of flesh. He noted, too, with sudden enlightenment, the permanent loss of boyishness, the bronzed hardening of face and throat that had long been strangers to the sharp contrast of white linen. With a sudden start he brought back his roving attention to the smug head waiter and his unlooked-for deference.

Seven o'clock and still they did not come! A deep discouragement fastened upon Carnochan, a growing conviction that they would not come at all. He had promised himself, in returning to New York, that he would make no deliberate effort to see them. He had come solely for business reasons, because the ship, on which he had worked his passage, landed him in Philadelphia; because New York was only two hours distant, and the chance of an order for a series of articles on the Philippines was too important a matter to be arranged by letter. Yet his elaborate self-deception was unsuccessful. Somewhere in the recesses of his mind lurked the consciousness that he had come under the spur of an overmastering homesickness; that back of all this pretense of business necessity lay an imperishable hope that some-

how, somewhere, he would catch a glimpse of the face for which he had hungered dumbly through five long years. And so, when late in the afternoon he had come upon Uncle Larry, quite by chance, at the corner of Forty-second Street and Fifth Avenue, although there had been for the moment more of pain than joy in the encounter, he had yielded to the complicated emotions that assailed him—the sudden flash of pride, the wish to show that he was not quite destitute, the imperious longing to see the girl whom he had never for an hour been able to put out of his thoughts—and the rash invitation had leaped to his lips. Uncle Larry had seemed pathetically glad to see him; had caught eagerly at the suggestion of a reunion in one of their old haunts. Gwen, he could answer for her, would be as glad to come as he. Would she? Carnochan was not so sure. Well, it would serve him right if she taught him his place by not coming.

Suddenly he felt impelled to turn, as though his name had been invoked. A woman was pausing uncertainly in the doorway, her glance pursuing an eager quest. He was conscious of a first impression of soft, harmonizing browns; then his gaze was drawn upward and centered on her face. Then, as they found each other, there came a sudden cowardice in his heart that dared not meet the unveiled gladness in her eyes. Yet she greeted him quite simply. Uncle Larry had been detained; he had telephoned from the club that she was not to wait for him, but to come ahead and make his excuses. He himself would join them later.

"And, Gerald," she continued frankly, "I was glad of the chance, for there are some things that I must say to you before uncle comes."

He felt that, behind the welcome of her greeting, she was mentally taking his measure, seeking to gauge the changes in him. The process hurt, like a probe in a gunshot wound. How nearly, he wondered, would she guess the completeness of his failure, the fundamental loss of faith in himself? But the level

glance gave no sign of disappointment, as she continued with simple directness:

"You will find uncle much changed, Gerald, and a good deal broken. He aged pitifully after you went away. He is so happy to have you back again, so anxious to make amends! You will meet him halfway, won't you, whatever offer he makes? You owe him some concessions, Gerald, for you have been rather cruel to him, don't you think? Rather cruel to both of us?"

"That is an unexpected turn of the tables," he said lightly, but his heart was beating with an unreasoning elation, just because she was standing before him, tall and willowy, with the old familiar challenge in her brown eyes, yet with it a new, sweet gravity, a subtle, intangible change that he dared not fathom. "Let me check your wraps," he said; "we shall lose our table if we wait out here." He smiled a little grimly as he relieved her of sable muff and jacket; it was wholesome discipline, he thought, to be reminded, by the musky redolence of the damp fur, of the gulf that lay between their two standards of living.

"Do not serve us yet," he ordered, as they ensconced themselves in the cozy corner reserved for them; "we are expecting another man." The waiter, lean, hawklike, automatic, hovered for a moment in final adjustment of napkins, forks and knives, then effaced himself discreetly down the vista of busy tables. "Now, then, go ahead," said Carnochan. "Never mind if it hurts!"

"Does it hurt to talk over old times?" she asked wistfully. "I am sorry, but there are some things I simply must make you understand, before Uncle Larry comes. You ought to have known that he never meant half he said that dreadful morning when you quarreled! Oh, that wretched quarrel, Gerald! It has haunted me like a nightmare ever since! Time after time I wake up in the night, dreaming it all over again, and trying to cover up my ears, because it seems as though I could not bear it; time after time I hear myself begging you to stop, and taking

your side, Gerald, as I might have taken it that day, if I only had been brave enough. And, after all, how petty and unnecessary it was! Uncle never refused you anything you asked, and he didn't refuse you then. No, don't interrupt; let me tell you first just how I see it, and then you can have your turn. You made the mistake of choosing a rather bad time to ask for money, though of course you didn't know that, you poor boy! Uncle had heard some rather sad stories of your extravagance, and was angry, in his hasty, blustering way. But he gave you the money, Gerald, even while he fumed and railed. And all of a sudden you grew angry too, and I thought for a moment you were going to fling the cheque in his face! And then you said, with such an unexpected assumption of dignity that I wanted to laugh, only I was too frightened, that you would never consider the money as belonging to you, but that you would take it to invest and show him that you were not the worthless fool he seemed to think! And when you thought that he was laughing at your earnestness, you turned white and swore solemnly that you would either return the money doubled or never again ask him for a penny. Of course, he said some bitter things after that about ingratitude, and changing his will and cutting you off—but he secretly admired your spirit, even then. But he didn't dream you meant it, Gerald, dear; he began the next morning to wait for you to come back. He has been waiting for you to come back ever since!"

"And you—" Carnochan found himself questioning involuntarily; "and you, Gwen? Were you waiting for me to come back on the morrow? Ah, no, you cannot honestly tell me that you were! You read me better than Uncle Larry did! You knew that unless I made good I would not come back, and you knew that it wasn't in me to make good!"

"I knew nothing of the sort!" retorted the girl indignantly. "I never for a moment lost faith in you, Gerald, although I understood better than uncle

how deeply he had hurt your pride. But you left a great emptiness in both our lives. How could you have been so unforgiving?"

"Oh, it wasn't that," he said, but with a sudden sense of crumbling ground beneath his feet. Had he been so self-centered all these years that he had been unconsciously hurting those dearest to him? "It was not your fault, nor Uncle Larry's. I would have come back, gladly, if I could have come without loss of self-respect. I wonder if I can make you understand. I was angry, very angry with you both, when I went away, with the quick anger and arrogance of youth. I was so sure of myself and of my untried abilities. I was going forth to conquer the world with uncle's hundred dollars. In the first white heat I saw myself with that hundred dollars achieving fabulous sums, scornfully flinging back all uncle had ever given me. Well, I cashed that cheque—I almost tore it up, and many a time since I have wished that I had—and then I fell in with Barnes and Hilton and Fred Grainger, the old crowd that you and uncle used to warn me against, and we came down here to this very room for a farewell dinner."

He came to a halt, with the abruptness of a thread that had snapped, and sat in silence, his unseeing gaze fixed on an adjacent table, watching the rhythmic clicking of the toy mechanism that laboriously mingled, drop by drop, the allotted measure of absinthe and sweetened water.

"And what next, Gerald?" the girl prompted gently. With visible reluctance he resumed:

"That's just the trouble, Gwen; I don't know what next! I have tried and tried, till my brain ached with the effort, to clear away the wretched blur of that night. I only know that, through it all, I can see myself moving in a sort of glorified, golden mist, planning fabulous achievements, proposing endless toasts, ordering endless rounds of drinks—and paying—paying endlessly with the freedom of a Cæsar, or a fool. And when I awoke the next morning, every dollar of Uncle Larry's money,

the money that I was pledged to double, was gone, and with it the last ounce of my self-esteem."

"And do you mean to tell me, Gerald Carnochan, that you had no better reason for vanishing and making us suffer through five long years than because you couldn't account for what you had done with a paltry hundred dollars? Why, I don't believe there ever was a time when you could have accounted for a hundred dollars! How absolutely foolish!"

"Yes, of course it was foolish; colossal, irresponsibly foolish, if you choose to see it that way. Oh, I have fought it out with myself often enough! I have cursed my weakness as cowardice, and laughed at it as a folly, and humored it as a feverish delusion. But I tell you, Gwen, it is stronger than I am. Can't you understand how I felt? Here was a test that I had set myself, and I had failed in it. I looked upon it as an omen, a symbol of the outcome of everything I might turn my hand to; and this feeling has strengthened month by month, because literally the result of everything I have tried up to tonight has been a sequence of inevitable failures!"

At this, the whole buoyant energy of the girl's youth and vitality rose up in protest.

"What morbid nonsense, Gerald! How dare you talk of failure when every inch of you proclaims the power to succeed? I don't know what you have been doing all these years. I don't need to know. You may have failed to do a lot of things that seemed very important to you. But there is one big thing that you have done, and you don't seem even aware of it!"

The man caught his breath a trifle sharply; it was all so different from what he had foreseen. "I don't understand!" he said helplessly.

"It is not quite easy to put into words," she answered carefully. "It isn't merely that you went away a boy and have come back a man—although that partly says it. But it is ever so much more than that; it is the feeling you give of strength—I don't mean just

physical strength, Gerald, although that was one of the things you lacked in the old days—but the kind of strength that would make you do the right thing, even if it was the hardest thing on earth to do. And yet you talk of failure!”

He wondered dumbly whether the girl guessed how hard she was making it for him to keep himself in hand. It was so long since he had read approval in a woman's eyes. “Oh, yes,” he found himself saying somewhat grimly, “I suppose I have grown up after a fashion! I am a bit wiser and no end tougher than the last time you saw me. But you are dead wrong about one thing, Gwen—I haven't the sort of strength you think I have or I wouldn't be here tonight talking to you. I should be putting the miles between us as fast as the Limited could take me! Don't be too kind to me, Gwen. Don't you know I am not a man to be satisfied with mere kindness?”

Her eyes looked unwaveringly into his, although the conscious color crept slowly up into her cheeks.

“And if you do not need to be satisfied with just kindness?” she said softly.

Then she did care! She had cared from the beginning! Yet, even while he said the words over to himself, he became aware that the element of surprise was lacking; that in a subconscious way this was what, more than anything else, he had feared in coming home again. He drew his hand impatiently across his brow.

“No, no, Gwen! This is sheer madness! Don't you understand that I have nothing to offer you, that I have brought back nothing but a record of failure? But I have kept my word, and I must go on keeping it. I won't throw myself on Uncle Larry's charity, even if it costs me you, Gwen!”

“Is it quite fair to punish three people on account of the failure of a foolish boast?”

“Of course,” he said somberly, “that is the way you must inevitably see it. But don't you understand that I can't see it that way; that I don't dare see it that way? That foolish boast was big

enough and real enough at the time to make me spoil five good years. It was the one haunting fact that I could not get away from, that followed me into stoke holes and fever camps!” He broke off abruptly, in response to her inarticulate note of distress, then resumed more lightly:

“Oh, yes, I have been through the depths. And it is too late now for me to stultify myself by admitting the unreason of it. You think I am not quite sane about Uncle Larry's money; and I dare say you are right! A hundred dollars does seem a paltry sum to wreck one's life over—if one happens to have it. I haven't happened to have a hundred dollars all at once from that day to this. But it wasn't the mere fact that I lost the money and haven't seen the time since when I could pay it back. . . . Why, Gwen, if I could only know that I had gone in for the maddest, most reckless sort of speculation, that I had made any kind of crazy, wild-cat investment, had bet or gambled the last cent of it away, and could know at the same time that I had acted in good faith, even then I might forgive myself, or at least it would not have bit into my nerves as it does now. But to think that I left you and uncle full of such arrogant ambition, and then, before the day was over, forgot my purpose, drugged my brain, frittered away my last penny on some wild orgy—that is what makes me feel unfit; that is what makes your kindness so impossible, Gwen!”

She smiled tremulously, looking at him with brave, misty eyes.

“I thought I had discovered a great change in you, Gerald. I really believed you had grown up, but in some ways you are even younger than when you went away.”

“I probably am a good deal of an idiot,” he agreed readily. “Why, do you know, I had a sort of lingering hope that in coming back I might clear up the mystery of what I did with the money—a foolish, irrational hope that perhaps after all I had made some sort of wild investment, and that all unknown to me it had turned out lucky. But of

course I had done nothing of the sort. I just flung it away on absurdities. Why, only this afternoon, when I went back to my old rooms on Gramercy Park—Mrs. Caulkins's, you remember—the old lady welcomed me with open arms, for she always had a soft spot in her heart for me. But she wasn't a bit surprised to see me—said she knew I would walk in unexpectedly some day, because if I hadn't been coming back, I wouldn't have left my boxes there all this time. And what do you think, Gwen? Down in the cellar I found half a dozen cases of some foreign stuff, French mineral water, or hair tonic, or something, that I have not the least recollection of buying. It came the day after I went away. I couldn't bear to look at it; I felt too heart-sick!"

"And ought I to feel heartsick, too, Gerald? I am really afraid I can't, because you know those six cases of mineral water are really deliciously funny!" She was frankly laughing at him, her eyes shining with the new, intangible gladness which his own mood seemed impotent to quench.

"Laugh at me, if you want to," he rejoined more lightly. "I suppose I do seem absurd. But the thing has become an obsession. In coming here tonight I was afraid of I don't know what—afraid that there might have been no end of a scandal that last time I dined here—afraid of the unknown outrageous things I may have done. But instead I received the traditional welcome of a prodigal son. The way in which the head waiter unbent made me feel that I had a reputation to live up to. If he hadn't greeted me by name I should have thought it a case of mistaken—"

He broke off suddenly as a broad, flaccid hand rested in heavy affection upon his shoulder. Uncle Larry, red of face, scant of breath, sputtering with mingled haste and geniality, stood beside him.

"Sorry, my boy—couldn't help it! Business, damned, annoying business! Lawyer kept me, pettifogging, up-country lawyer! Gwendolen, I said

you were not to wait. I said most particularly you were not to wait!"

"We would much rather have waited, uncle, dear. Gerald had so many things to tell me that it has seemed no time at all."

He eyed the pair with whimsical suspicion.

"Humph! Been telling you things, has he? Close as a clam with me, this afternoon. Perhaps, when you get good and ready, you two, you will tell your old uncle something, eh, what?"

Gerald, yielding himself to a new contentment, watched the girl's light, caressing touch on her uncle's arm, her wise, intuitive humoring of his mood. It was destined to go off well, after all, this dinner; fate for once had seen fit to raise the ban. The hawklike waiter hovered, swooped and vanished, in rhythmic alternation. The simple, well-chosen courses fostered in Uncle Larry an expansive geniality that found expression in almost pathetic recognition.

"To think you should remember the things I like best, after all these years, Gerald, my boy! After all these years!"

Gerald left it for Gwendolen to guide the conversation through calm waters. In response to her deft questioning he lightly skimmed the surface of his adventures, through Java, Japan, the Philippines, carefully suppressing the sickness, the misery, the racking, grimy toil, and discovering to his own surprise how much humor lay dormant in many a grim experience. Yet all the while he was studying Uncle Larry, noting with growing compunction the new tremulousness, the relentless inroads of age. He recognized that Gwen had not exaggerated; that here was a broken old man, pathetically reaching out for someone on whom to lean. Here, only too plainly, was where duty lay; yet, so long as the obsession held him that he was a ne'er-do-well, a predestined Jonah, Gwen, though never so kind, must remain inaccessible. He became aware that it was the staying, not the going, that might be the harder thing to do—and simultaneously with this knowledge came the determination to do it, if only Uncle Larry spoke the word.

But this expected word was slow in coming. Throughout the dinner all reference to the old days, all definite plans for the future, were avoided, as though by a concerted purpose. Uncle Larry seemed to assume, but with half-veiled nervousness, that Gerald was home to stay. Again and again he caught himself in the midst of a half-uttered sentence, involving this assumption, and broke off abruptly, as though dreading a denial. At last, over dessert and coffee, the old man straightened his bowed shoulders with the familiar shrug that betokened a purpose not to be thwarted, and faced Carnochan, a look of infinite anxiety in his eyes.

"Jolly dinner, Gerald; no end jolly dinner! Tell him so yourself Gwen! Hang it, why don't you tell him so yourself? Haven't felt so happy in five years—not in five years, thanks to you, you rascal. And that's something we've got to settle. Got to settle it tonight; yes, sir, settle it right now and here! There's to be no more running off, no more dropping out of sight, and leaving us to wonder whether you are dead or alive! We can't bear it, Gwen and I. We can't bear it, damme if we can! Stay on your own terms, Gerald; only say that you'll stay!"

But no sooner had he put his question into words than Uncle Larry's courage ebbed.

"Think it over, my boy; that's it, think it over. And while you are thinking, you are going to have just one glass of Chartreuse with me—the genuine old green Chartreuse; none of the modern fake stuff! This is one of the few places where you still can get it."

Green Chartreuse! The name reached back into the haze of old memories, like the trailing fragments of a forgotten dream. Green Chartreuse! Why, of course, in the old improvident days it was a familiar name to conjure with. But there was something of more moment connected with it, something that he ought to remember, something that he must remember if Uncle Larry would only give him time;

but the old gentleman, genially expansive in the contentment of the present hour, prosed joyously on:

"Here, waiter, I say, waiter! Three glasses of green Chartreuse. No, no; I mean your private stock, old reserve, the real thing, whatever you call it! Prince of all cordials, Gerald, my boy, prince of all cordials! But there'll never be any more of it, Gerald; it's one of the lost arts. Crime against nations, when the French Government turned those old monks out; that's what it was—crime against nations! They knew a lot about life, those old Carthusians! They knew all the earthly joys they were robbing themselves of! Perhaps I am a fanciful old fellow, but I like to think of them, pottering over their pots, distilling their fragrant herbs in search of an expression for their lost youth, an outlet for their stifled longings! Green Chartreuse is a symbol of the joy of living, the joy that you can't buy and often don't miss until it is too late!"

The smug head waiter, whose deference earlier in the evening had awakened Gerald's wonderment, approached ceremoniously, bearing the familiar chunky bottle with the bulging neck and unmistakable monastic label.

"You need not tell Mr. Carnochan the value of green Chartreuse," he said with bland condescension. "I have great respect for a gentleman who could see so far ahead how valuable it would become. Do I take a liberty when I ask if Mr. Carnochan has any of his six cases remaining?"

Suddenly the fog seemed to lift from a benighted corner of Gerald's brain. He saw himself once more, foolishly young and buoyant, flushed with excitement and with wine, hilariously ordering endless glasses, endless bottles, endless cases of—what had tantalized, eluded, baffled his memory all these years—that insidious, opalescent, green Chartreuse! And at the same time he saw across the table Gwen's face convulsed with silent hysterics.

"Oh, Gerald, your French mineral water!" she murmured chokingly.

"Six cases, eh, what?" sputtered

Uncle Larry, his bright old eyes widening with wonder. "Six cases of Chartreuse, and you never told me? Always said you were a clam, Gerald, eh, what?"

"Have I Mr. Carnochan's permission to tell the story?" queried the bland head waiter, tilting the squat bottle till a thin emerald stream was given forth, with the sluggish solemnity of an oblation.

"Oh, don't mind me," said Gerald with grim humor. "I rather think I should like to hear the story myself."

"It must have been five years ago, and at this very table."—"Five lifetimes," interpolated Gerald silently.—"There were four young gentlemen in the party, and a lively time you seemed to be having. You all took green Chartreuse, I remember, because you questioned me about it. I remember telling you that we had just received a big consignment and that there would not be much more to be had, because the Government had confiscated the monastery and the monks must all go to Spain. They might try to go on making a liqueur, but it would never be the same Chartreuse. I said I would not be surprised if it soon doubled in value, and Mr. Carnochan, here, started up and said, 'Double in value! It's an omen!' he said. 'I have sworn to buy the first thing I heard of that was going to double in value!' I remember it, because, if you will pardon me, it seemed such an odd thing to have said, and because you seemed so excited, and the other gentlemen thought it so funny. I don't believe they think it so funny now. They must wish they had some themselves."

"Gone up a good deal, eh, what?" questioned Uncle Larry jerkily.

"Out of the market altogether, sir, in France. The Hotel Alouette had a cablegram this morning from a retail house in Paris, offering a hundred dollars a case, charges paid. If you should wish to dispose of any of yours, Mr. Carnochan, the house would no doubt be glad to make you the same offer."

"Oh, Gerald, you ridiculous boy,"

murmured Gwen as the squat bottle disappeared in state down the vista of busy tables; "to think that, instead of being a foreordained Jonah, you are nothing but a predestined mascot!"

"I don't suppose there is any need of my knowing what you two are laughing about," interposed Uncle Larry testily.

"Every need in the world, Uncle Larry. We have just found out that I am a success instead of a failure—a colossal, unconscious, accidental success! A bloated capitalist instead of a beggar, with a capital of six hundred dollars worth of green Chartreuse. We have just found out what came of my first business venture, my first plunge into frenzied finance with the hundred dollars that I was to double. You heard the head waiter's munificent offer; shall I close with him?" Then, noting certain ominous signs in Uncle Larry's reddening face, he added hastily:

"But I'm not going to do anything of the kind, Uncle Larry; I have a far better idea than that. I am going to make over my entire stock of green Chartreuse to you, as a consideration to bind the bargain that I am to stay home." Then in serious tones: "I had already made up my mind to stay, not on my terms, but on yours. But now I can add, and Gwen will understand, even if you don't, that I am going to stay on her terms too—and that was something that I couldn't have trusted myself to say earlier in the evening."

Uncle Larry looked shrewdly from one to the other of the glad faces before him, winked rather hard, and furtively passed a hand across his eyes as he slowly raised the slim glass with its contents of shimmering green.

"A long and happy life to both of you!" he said with quaint formality. Then, with the old familiar twinkle in his eyes:

"But perhaps you may just as well turn those six cases over to me. You will have an abundance of the joy of living without further aid from green Chartreuse!"

THE PORTRAIT

By FLORINE R. WORMSER

CHARACTERS

CECILE GRAHAM (*a widow*)
MRS. MARK WARREN (*an acquaintance*)
JOHN GRAHAM (*CECILE's brother-in-law*)
MR. TURNER (*CECILE's father*)

PLACE: *The Grahams' city home.*

TIME: *The present*

SCENE—*Sitting room at the Graham house, luxuriously furnished, walls draped, a long, low book-case filled with books at the rear. A large writing table with drawers at the right, covered with books and papers. One chair at the right of the table, one at the left. A fire burning in the fireplace at the left, over which is a mantel on which are numerous photographs, prominent among them being one in a large silver frame—that of Guy Graham, deceased. A sofa in front of the fire by the side of which stands a low table on which are cigars, cigarettes and matches. Several chairs about the room—everything indicating a man's room. Doors at right and left.*

(At the curtain CECILE GRAHAM is discovered in widow's weeds sitting at the left of the table contemplating the empty chair at the right, presumably that of her dead husband. She stretches her arms out toward the chair and lets her head sink, then looking up, rises.)

CECILE

Oh, thank God that I am alone—alone—away from all prying eyes! *(Walks slowly across to the fireplace and stands gazing at her husband's picture.)* They all mean kindly—all my friends and yours who try to comfort me, but if they only knew, Guy, how I long to be alone with you! Oh, my darling, why did you leave me? It's hardly a week now since you were taken from me, and when I think of all the years—*(Sinks disconsolately on the couch, still talking to the picture above her.)* We were happy, Guy, were we not? Oh, I want you, Guy—your eyes—your lips—your arms to hold me—

(Enter MRS. WARREN, advancing hurriedly from the left.)

CECILE (*starting at the sound and rising in astonishment*)

Mrs. Warren!

MRS. WARREN

Yes—I suppose you are surprised to see me?

CECILE

A little—yes. I had told my servants—

MRS. WARREN (*much agitated*)

—to allow no one in—yes, I know—your man told me so at the door—but I pushed my way in in spite of him. *(Comes close to CECILE and takes her hand, which CECILE withdraws as quickly as possible.)* You must pardon my presumption, my dear Mrs. Graham—my bad taste in forcing myself unsolicited on you in this sad hour—but I

only want one moment, one little moment of your time; and when I tell you that the matter is of the utmost importance to me—almost a question of life and death— (CECILE starts.) Oh, pardon me—I hardly know what I am saying—I am so worried—so excited—

CECILE (*interrupting haughtily*)

I am sorry for your trouble, Mrs. Warren—but I feel so helpless myself since my great loss that I am sure I can be of very little assistance to anyone. Still, if a few minutes of my time are of any help to you— (*Motions to the vacant chair.*)

MRS. WARREN (*sitting—then speaking effusively*)

Oh, thank you so much, my dear Mrs. Graham. I knew that I could call on you for help. Why, everyone speaks of your kindness—your generosity—

CECILE (*smiling sadly and sitting on the couch*)

Don't forget, will you, that you only asked for a few minutes. You see, I expect my brother-in-law and my father shortly on some law business. They wish to look over poor Guy's papers.

MRS. WARREN (*hurriedly*)

Oh, really, I'll only be a moment—I know how dreadful it must be for you to be compelled to listen to a stranger's troubles at such a time. But I am sure, when I have told you all, you will understand, forgive and, I hope, help me.

CECILE

I hope I shall be able to.

MRS. WARREN

Well, you know pretty much all about me, do you not? So I will not go very deep into family history. You know how Mark took me, a poor girl, made me his wife and then commanded me in his most autocratic fashion not to have anything more to do with my family. Had he any right to expect obedience? Of course, I was his—the money was his; but I married him, not because I loved him, but because I thought that by doing so I might help my people. What could I do? What would you have done? What would any other decent woman have done? (*She starts up and walks up and down.*)

Of course I disobeyed him—once—twice—but the third time he caught me and threatened me with all sorts of punishments, as though I were a child or some criminal whom he was condemning before judge and jury—

CECILE (*quietly*)

He had the right—had he not?

MRS. WARREN (*sitting again and leaning forward anxiously as she talks*)

Oh, the right—of course; and yet, when only a few days after that my father sent me word that if he did not have one thousand dollars at once anything—everything might happen, what could I do? What would you have done? I saw visions of prison walls—headlines in the papers—and, above all, Mark's face—cold—cynical! Just that very day your husband— (CECILE starts)—came to see Mark on business. Mark was out, but I received him, picked up all my courage—and—and asked him to lend me the money. He, big, generous creature that he was, did so—but I insisted on giving him my note for the amount— (*She hesitates.*)

CECILE

Queer he never told me anything about it!

MRS. WARREN (*eagerly*)

Not queer at all. You see, I made him swear absolute secrecy, and time and time again he assured me that no one, not even you, knew anything about it. (*She eyes CECILE keenly.*) Well, I saved my father, and a week ago today I made the last payment on the note to your husband in my sitting room. He did not have the note with him, but promised to bring it to me to destroy in a day or two. The next day, however, he was taken with this fatal illness—and so— (*She fidgets about nervously.*) He told me that he kept the note in one of the locked drawers of his writing table, and that you had the key; and I thought that if I came to you and asked you to—to open the drawer and to give me the note, we could at once burn it in that fire over there and all would be forgotten. You see, I felt that otherwise, Mark being the lawyer, he might—(*growing excited*)—he surely

would find the letters—I mean the note—and then— (*Rises and goes up closer to CECILE.*) My God, Mrs. Graham, you must—you absolutely must give me the key at once!

CECILE (*rising calmly*)

Give you the key and have you go through Guy's papers? Mrs. Warren, how unreasonable you are!

MRS. WARREN (*tensely*)

But I must have that note! Do you not see that if anyone were to find it they would be sure to think all sorts of things—people are always so kind—

CECILE (*quietly*)

What sort of things?

MRS. WARREN (*carelessly*)

How can I tell? Still, when a man gives—lends a woman money— (*CECILE starts.*) Of course you and I both know that Guy—Mr. Graham—often did such things out of pure goodness of heart, but other people—Mark—

CECILE (*haughtily*)

Mrs. Warren, it is hardly necessary for you to make excuses for my husband.

MRS. WARREN (*curiously*)

You would never believe anything that could be said against him?

CECILE (*firmly*)

Never! My faith, my belief in him is such that nothing can ever touch it—as well think that the earth would slip from under my feet; that the moon and stars should fall. But how can I even talk of such things?

MRS. WARREN (*consolingly*)

No; of course, you are right, and I was only supposing—but you will open the drawer for me now, will you not?

CECILE

I haven't the key.

MRS. WARREN (*starting*)

Not got the key!

CECILE

No; I gave it to John, my brother-in-law, last night.

MRS. WARREN (*walking up and down, much agitated*)

My God! What can I do—what can I do? (*Stops close beside CECILE.*) Could you get it from him? Could you not tell him that you need the key—

that you wish to look for something? (*tensely*) For the love of God, woman, do not let that note get into my husband's hands!

CECILE (*touched by her distress*)

I will see what I can do—but not now. (*MRS. WARREN starts.*) But I promise you that no one will touch that drawer—before I do, and that as soon as possible I will get the note for you. And now—

MRS. WARREN (*hurriedly*)

Yes, yes, I know that you are tired, and that you have been most kind—but, you see, I am half mad with all this worry—

CECILE (*kindly*)

You may go home quietly and rest assured that the note will fall in no one's hands but mine.

MRS. WARREN (*walking toward the door at the left*)

Yes, I will go now. Thank you so much for promising to help me. Good-bye. (*Turns back; comes up to CECILE and takes her hand.*) You will surely not forget?

CECILE (*absent-mindedly*)

No.

MRS. WARREN

Oh, thanks so much—good-bye.

CECILE (*walking up and down, lost in thought*)

How dreadful! I cannot understand why my servant admitted her. Such people always think there is comfort in companionship—I am sure they count my lonesomeness the worst feature of my bereavement. (*Goes up to the picture on the mantel and looks at it a moment sadly.*) Yes, Guy, I am lonesome, but only for you—not for the rest of the world. My darling, my darling, what has that woman made me think? I am sure that she is wicked. I have often thought—but no—how could I? I know you loved me—your last words, your last thought was for me, dearest—was it not? I can just picture to myself how that creature played on your feelings—you big, generous— (*Starts.*) Oh, God, those were her very words! It makes me jealous, dear, to think that any other woman could have known you well enough to

have said that of you. (*Sits on the couch—gazes before her.*) And then, John—my father—how queerly they have acted about the papers—about all of Guy's private affairs— (*She stands before the picture on the mantel.*) No, Guy, no—it's a poor sort of love that turns to doubt on such slight provocation. All my life I have loved and believed in you—I will not fail you now because your arms are not around me, because your dear voice cannot tell me that my fears are groundless. Even were they not—even were it true—no—no—I would not doubt you, Guy. You are my life—my heaven—my eternity! (*Kisses the picture, then sinks down on couch and gazes into fire. Enter JOHN GRAHAM and MR. TURNER. The latter carries a cash box, which he places on the table. JOHN goes over to CECILE. He is dressed in deep mourning.*)

JOHN

Well, Cecile—

CECILE (*giving him her hand*)

Ah, John—I was expecting you. (*Looks over at MR. TURNER, rises, goes over to right and embraces him.*) My dear father, I am so glad that you are here. You are my greatest comfort—you must never, never leave me.

MR. TURNER (*kissing her*)

No, of course not. You know how glad I am to be with you. (*Walks over with her to the couch. She sits; her father stands by her.*)

JOHN (*taking a cigarette from stand, and lighting it*)

Did you see the papers this morning, Cecile? (*CECILE shakes her head.*) They are full of eulogies on poor Guy. I will get them all for you and you must read them. It makes one happy to see how much the poor fellow was thought of. (*CECILE smiles sadly. JOHN walks up and down uneasily; MR. TURNER seats himself at the table.*) The last time I saw poor Guy he was standing there—right there— (*Motions toward the fireplace. CECILE starts.*) And to think that it was only last week! He felt badly then already—there was a blazing fire and he said he felt cold. But then poor Guy was always a bit nervous.

CECILE (*indignantly*)

Nervous—never! If he had been nervous he would have lost patience a hundred times a day with me. I was always tormenting him, always bothering him with stupid questions, when he was at work there— (*pointing toward the table and smiling sadly*)—I was always plaguing him. I think it was only a vain attempt of mine to show my power over him, the brilliant statesman; but never an unkind word—always good, always patient— (*Sighs.*) Ah me! (*Starts up and walks over to her father.*) You will excuse me a few moments, will you not? (*Goes toward door at the right.*) Besides, I am sure that you and John still have a hundred and one things to talk over.

MR. TURNER

Quite right, my child—we have. (*Looks after her tenderly. CECILE smiles at him from doorway and goes out.*) How do you find her, John?

JOHN

Who—I? Oh, as well as can be expected under the circumstances, don't you think?

MR. TURNER (*sadly*)

Yes, I suppose so. Anyhow, I am glad that we are able to save her that gruesome work. (*Points to box on table.*) I think that all the papers are there and in order, and as soon as Cecile has read the will there will be nothing more to trouble her.

JOHN

Yes—and, thank God, it is all over! (*Throws himself back on the couch.*) Nothing has ever seemed more dismal to me than this going over of a dead man's papers. (*Motions to the box on the table.*) There lie the secrets, the history of his life—which he has always kept locked up in his holy of holies—now laid bare to be read by any strange, any unfriendly eye.

MR. TURNER

Hardly unfriendly, John—his brother and his wife's father. Still (*smiling sadly*), maybe you are right. From what we have learnt from those papers

it was just as well that we, and no others, opened the box. I wonder if he had any more of this incriminating stuff anywhere about? If so, it might as well be destroyed.

JOHN

I think that was all (*feeling in his side pockets*). I have the key here to that table over there, but as Cecile gave it to me herself, and as she always had it in charge, there is surely nothing in it—

MR. TURNER

And yet I am afraid, my boy—would it not be too sad should anything happen now—when we have tried so hard to shield her! (*Rises—walks over to JOHN.*) Do you know, I am worried—much worried for the child. Listen, John—as I came in the man told me that Mrs. Warren had been with Cecile quite a while this afternoon.

JOHN (*starting up on the couch*)

Who?

MR. TURNER

Mrs. Warren.

JOHN

Mrs. Warren! That creature—what? She dared—she had the impertinence to come here to see Cecile—at such a time—when all the world—our world—is busy discussing her affair with Guy, and wondering how much Cecile knows or is going to find out!

MR. TURNER (*hurriedly*)

Ah, I am sure that so far she knows nothing, but John—look here, my boy—there is really no need for any ceremony between you and me. My God, boy, why need she ever know? Why must she have her beautiful faith shattered?

JOHN

No reason at all. If you and I can keep it from her we will, but that she-devil—that Warren woman—to have come here—

MR. TURNER

Yes, and, John, I am afraid that there may be some trace of the affair still among some of poor Guy's papers. Do you know of any more that could be lying anywhere?

JOHN

No—none at all, except what might

be in those drawers there— (*Points to the table.*)

MR. TURNER

Well, don't you think that we had better look and see those also?

JOHN (*easily*)

Oh, there's nothing there, I am sure. I told you Cecile always had the key—she gave it to me only last night. You know how Guy trusted her—

MR. TURNER (*bitterly*)

Yes, and betrayed her! You see, he could always count on the implicit confidence which she had in him—she would no more have thought of going through his papers than she would have taken anything not hers. (*Goes closer to the table.*) I don't know, boy, but I feel as though we should go through those drawers—you and I. You see, he would not be apt to have put letters from Mrs. Warren—always supposing that things were as we suspect—in the box with all his papers.

JOHN (*thoughtfully*)

No, that is true.

(*Enter CECILE at the right*)

CECILE (*coming forward*)

Well, have you two talked over everything?

JOHN

Oh, yes, we had quite finished.

CECILE

By the way, John, where is the key to Guy's table which I gave you last night?

JOHN (*embarrassed*)

The key! Oh, do you know, I think I left it at home.

CECILE (*reproachfully*)

Oh, John, is that the way you take care of things entrusted to you? I must open that drawer at once. It is of the utmost importance. John, look at your key chain—maybe you have it, anyway. (*Goes up to him beseechingly.*)

JOHN

Does so much depend on it, little girl?

CECILE (*earnestly*)

Yes, another person's happiness. (*JOHN takes the key chain from his pocket. His fingers keep moving nervously.*)

ously. MR. TURNER stands by, also nervous.)

CECILE (*stretching out hand for the key*)
Come, John, give it to me.

JOHN (*handing it to her*)

Yes, I have it. Here it is. (CECILE takes the key and walks to the table. JOHN follows her nervously.) But, really, Cecile, why such a hurry? Old papers always make such a disagreeable impression; one naturally thinks of the hand that wrote them—the now nerveless fingers—the stilled brain—

CECILE (*turning, surprised*)

Why, John!

MR. TURNER (*coming up to CECILE*)
John is quite right, my child—

CECILE

Father, you too—but you know I have no nerves.

JOHN

Oh, maybe. And I may be a bit of an ass about these things—but, you see, old Warren and I have been pottering about with those gruesome papers all afternoon. And now you want to begin all over again.

CECILE (*determinedly, going to the table*)

You need not stay, John, if you do not care to—but I must open that drawer at once.

MR. TURNER (*coming up to her*)

See here, child, I think John is quite right. Why not leave them until some other time? Or, better still, let John or let me go through them for you—we can sort out those that are of no importance and save the rest for you.

CECILE (*seating herself at the table*)

You are both very kind, but I prefer doing this myself. Guy never had any secrets from me, you know—never. I always had the key to all his things—he hated anyone to go through his papers— (*The men look at each other.*) Of course I never touched them— (*Puts the key in the lock of the drawer—turns it.*) I imagine that even now he would mind less if he knew that I—his wife—were doing this for him.

June, 1909—6

MR. TURNER (*going up to her and gently taking her hand*)

Don't go through those papers today, my child.

CECILE

Why not today? What horror do you expect me to pounce on?

MR. TURNER (*soothingly*)

None at all—none at all. But associations—and your loss being so recent.

JOHN (*impatiently*)

Exactly—but, my dear Mr. Turner, you know how women always like to pile up the agonies.

CECILE (*reproachfully*)

Oh, John, how cruel!

JOHN (*going up to her*)

Forgive me—but all this has upset me. (*She nods to him—pulls open drawers—gazes at contents without touching.*)

JOHN (*starting and whispering to Mr. TURNER*)

I may be a coward—anything you like—but I cannot face this. Supposing she finds something? (*Turns to CECILE.*) Cecile, I promised the fellows at the club to come back for bridge. (*Takes her hand.*) Good-bye, my dear. (*To Mr. TURNER.*) You'll stay with her, will you not? (*Walks toward door. MR. TURNER follows him.*) That damned Warren woman—I'd like to throttle her! (*Looks at CECILE.*) Hope she finds nothing. (*Goes out. MR. TURNER comes forward to the table.*)

CECILE (*thoughtfully*)

Maybe I can help that poor creature.

MR. TURNER

What did you say?

CECILE (*absent-mindedly*)

Nothing. (*Takes papers from table drawer and slowly lays them out.*)

MR. TURNER

Cecile—how queerly you act!—come away from this, child. Your servants tell me that you have eaten nothing; come and have some tea with me.

CECILE (*hardly hearing*)

No, thank you, father—time enough to eat when my work is done.

MR. TURNER

What work, child? How strangely you act!

CECILE

Not strangely, father. (*She stops and looks at MR. TURNER across the table.*) You are my father—and love me dearly?

MR. TURNER

You know that, child, do you not?

CECILE

Well, then, father, I have a secret to tell you—I am looking for something.

MR. TURNER

Looking?

CECILE

Yes, looking for a note signed by Mrs. Warren.

MR. TURNER (*in a shocked tone*)

Mrs. Warren!

CECILE (*slowly*)

Yes, by Mrs. Warren—in which she promised to pay Guy a thousand dollars which he had loaned her. (*TURNER starts.*) You see, it seems that she paid him back just before he was taken ill—but he had not returned her her note.

MR. TURNER

Ah! But why must you look for it—and now?

CECILE

Because the poor creature was here a few moments ago, all in a tremble for fear that the note might fall into her husband's hands. So I promised to find it for her and restore it to her. (*Looks in the drawer.*)

MR. TURNER

But, child, either John or I could have done that quite as well as you.

CECILE

No, I must do it; neither you nor John—I do not believe that either of you ever cared very much for Mrs. Warren. Well, I never did either, but if Guy thought her worthy of aid I must be the one to finish his work. (*Takes out more papers and puts them on the table.*) These are all receipts and nothing of any value—ah, the note must be here—here in this package—(*Takes out a package of letters on top of which is tied a photograph. She starts.*)

MR. TURNER

What is it, child?

CECILE (*looking at picture, quietly*)

A photograph—of a woman—a wom-

an—in evening dress—with a mask—a mask over her eyes! (*There is a brief silence.*)

MR. TURNER (*in a trembling voice*)

Masked! Let me see.

CECILE (*handing him package*)

There are some letters also, and maybe the note—Mrs. Warren's note—is there also.

MR. TURNER

Maybe. I'll go through them. (*Looks at the photograph.*) But this picture is not Mrs. Warren's!

CECILE (*surprised*)

Did I say it was?

MR. TURNER (*embarrassed*)

No—no—only I thought you might suspect it was.

CECILE (*nervously*)

I—I never suspect—anything. (*Comes around the table and looks over her father's shoulder as he holds the package.*) Still—now that I look at it again—I think—yes, I really admit that it might—yes, it might be Mrs. Warren. (*Slowly.*) I never saw her smile—anyhow, not quite that way, showing all her teeth—and with the rest of her face hidden, but—I could—yes, I could imagine her smiling just that way—her mouth is coarse, is it not? Still, what does it matter—what is the difference whether that picture is Mrs. Warren's or is not Mrs. Warren's?

MR. TURNER

You are quite right, child—what does it matter? (*Rises, goes to couch and sits. CECILE follows him, going to the fireplace and standing next to her father.*) I am going to take all this trash to John and then destroy it.

CECILE (*gazing into the fire dreamily*)

Would that be quite fair? I promised Mrs. Warren, you know, to get the note and give it to her.

MR. TURNER (*impatiently*)

Oh, Mrs. Warren—you have done quite enough for her, and I imagine she will be quite satisfied as long as no trace of her let—of the note remains.

CECILE (*turning on him*)

Father, you hurt me—you hurt me here. (*Places her hand over her heart.*)

I know what you are thinking—what you are suspecting.

MR. TURNER (*hurriedly*)

Nothing, child—nothing.

CECILE (*growing more agitated. She speaks quickly*)

Oh, yes; you suspect me and you believe—Father, it is not the first time lately that both you and John have acted queerly whenever Mrs. Warren's name or Guy's name has been mentioned.

MR. TURNER (*trying to calm her*)

No, child—no.

CECILE (*decisively*)

But I say yes—I have often noticed that you were suspicious, that you did not trust Guy. Ah, you thought that I did not understand! But I understood—understood only too well—but listen, father. (*She kneels beside him as he sits on the couch.*)

I loved him—as a priest loves his God—as a dog his master. I would have suffered shame, hunger, any agony for him while he was alive—and now that he is dead, now, father, you allow this miserable suspicion to creep into your mind; you are afraid that I may learn, may discover something from those papers. (*Points to the papers in her father's hands.*)

Ah, father, you do not know how

much I loved him—how I idolized him! (*dreamily*) I even think, had I been sure that some other woman could have made him happier than I did, I would have gone away quietly—and have left him to her. Ah, yes, father—you see, I never could understand how he, Guy, with all his brilliancy, could ever have loved poor ignorant me. All my life I felt so infinitely beneath him; and now you would have me think badly of him—you think so already—you would take those letters—you would gloat over them—you would like to tear off the mask from that woman's face. No, I say no—a thousand times no. I believed in Guy living; for God's sake, leave me my faith in him now that he is dead. No, father—give me those letters! (*Takes them from him.*) No one shall read them—neither you nor I. (*Starts up—throws the package in the fire, where they burn.*)

There—there—oh, how they burn—(*fiercely*)—the love—words—and her face—(*Tries to control herself and turns to her father.*) Maybe Mrs. Warren's note was there also. Never mind; I will tell her that I burned it—that I—(*Throws herself on the floor at her father's feet.*) Oh, father—father—give me back my old belief—my old faith!

CURTAIN



WERE I MILADY'S JADE EARRING

By MILDRED R. CRAM

WILL SHAKESPEARE caused a man in love
 To swear he'd be the little glove
 Upon his lady's hand,
 That he might kiss the hand and swear
 His lips would ever linger there.
 But if I had my way, my dear,
 I'd tinkle by Milady's ear,
 And whisper now and then:
 "Love, if the jewel be dearly prized,
 Why should my heart be so despised?"

THE WOMAN IN A MILLION

By MARIE BELDEN JAMES

WHEN young Ridgley died seven men made up the firm of Brophy, Wethers & Co.—old Brophy, old Wethers, old Arnold, old Blake, old Philips, old Carruthers and young Ridgley. They were all old enough and feeble enough to die except young Ridgley—but young Ridgley it was that died.

Norris, whose head resembled a shiny brown egg topped with select bristles from a mucilage brush, held the telegram from Ridgley's mother and reflected over it for several valuable minutes. Then he crumpled the yellow thing into his pocket and went to talk to Brophy.

One of Norris's main recommendations for the position he held as manager of the firm—they called him manager *for* the firm—was a talent for knowing how to approach people. He always approached Brophy with an aggressive shoulder thrust forward, and on it a large and aggressive chip. So he began now as if delivering his final statement on a subject over which he and Brophy had warred for years.

"I tell you, Brophy, it will not do to tell the office force now," he stated firmly.

Brophy turned his wrinkled face and eyes in which time had kindly left half-laughs to make up for taking away the real whole ones of youth.

"What won't it do to tell them, and why won't it do to tell them, and when will it do to tell them?" he asked.

"That Ridgley's dead," said Norris, sitting down. "It won't do to tell them because today means a crisis to us, and things have got to go on without any breaks. Grover—that chap

who was such a chum of Ridgley's, you know—opened the message when it came upstairs and collapsed. I had to send him home in a cab." Norris spoke as though he could have forgiven Grover, had he been well enough to go home on a car. "We can tell them tonight," he went on. "Then they'll have Sunday to get over it in. It isn't as if they could do anything. If a man's dead, he's dead. Is it going to make any difference to Miss Harvey whether she knows it now or tonight? No, of course not! Is it going to make any difference to us? The greatest. If Miss Harvey knew Ridgley was dead she'd fall down. You know she would. If she fell down today, where'd we be? She's a woman in a million."

"You're a logician, Norris," said the old man feebly, "but I think you're a brute."

Norris laughed.

"I can't get used to your new-fashioned, cold-blooded ways of looking at things," went on Brophy. "In my day there was a man named Browning who wrote poetry that people read, and he said something like 'With your riches and your cities and the rest, love is best.' I don't believe he would have kept people from telling a girl that her lover was dead, just on account of a financial crisis in a nine million dollar stock company."

"He married a sick, angel-faced one, didn't he?" said Norris. "Could lie like a good one about things she was ashamed of having said. Made out they were translated from the Portuguese. But couldn't have run an office like Miss Harvey out there any more than you could manage a business

the way I can. That's what made Bob so keen on this 'Love is best' philosophy. And I suppose he and she were only exaggerations of the typical old-fashioned man and woman. Now, the man and woman of today, thank heaven, are different. They are colder-blooded and cooler-headed. They realize that love *isn't* best—it's obvious that it isn't—and they live accordingly. I say, don't tell Miss Harvey her lover is dead, or it will interfere with things of real importance—and I'll wager that when you *do* tell her, she'll say I was right."

"According to your own arguments," returned Brophy quietly, "it ought not to make the slightest difference. If she realizes, as you said, that love isn't best, I should suppose that, upon hearing Ridgley was dead, she would say, 'Oh, is he?' and go on attending to things of real importance."

Before Norris had time to answer the office door was pushed open and a girl with a mass of golden hair and eyes that were soft, blue-gray clouds, said in a quick, clear monotone, "Mr. Norris, Cramer of Livingston & Cramer is on the wire. Business important. I think you ought to talk with him."

"All right, Miss Harvey," said Norris in his business voice.

Ten minutes later the manager was back again. Brophy sat in the same place, smiling to himself. He had spent in meditating the time that Norris had occupied by selling, over the 'phone, a quarter of a million dollars' worth of stock.

"It ought to be so," said Norris, as though they had not been interrupted, "but it isn't. That girl with the wonderful eyes would probably faint if I told her her lover had died. She loved him—I've seen her look at him—better than he ever dreamed of loving her, and yet I'm sure that, though she'd faint if I told her now, afterwards she'll say I did right not to tell her."

"Norris," said Brophy, "if we hadn't hired you at a salary that is obviously a swindle to administer the affairs of this office, I should be tempted to kick you out of it and go and tell that

poor girl the truth. As it is—and as there's nobody who could take your place—my chivalry isn't strong enough—"

"Your chivalry isn't *old* enough," said Norris calmly. "It is of a generation beginning to be touched by the materialism you object to in me. If your chivalry were three generations older, or abnormally developed like Bob Browning's, you would kick me out without stopping to think that there is nobody who could possibly fill my place. While, if it were a little younger, you would realize that there is one person who could fill it."

"Who?" said Brophy, with one of his half-laughs. "Tell me that and I *will* kick you out."

"It's safe to tell you," said the manager. "You're helpless. Miss Harvey could take my place. But if you kicked me out and told her, she'd faint, and have to go home in a cab, and then where'd you be? But I forgot—you said she would not faint. She'd say, 'Oh, is he?' and go on with things of real importance."

"Oh, no, I didn't!" interposed Brophy. "I said the kind of woman you described would do that. If I thought Miss Harvey would say, 'Oh, is he?' and go on with business when told that her lover had died suddenly, I should despise her."

"If I thought it," said Norris, "I should respect her as I have never respected a woman."

At five minutes of five that evening the crisis in the affairs of Brophy, Wethers & Company was past. Then it was that Norris asked Miss Harvey to step into Mr. Brophy's office.

"Miss Harvey," said Norris quickly, "I have to tell you that Mr. Ridgley, the junior partner of this firm, died suddenly last night from heat prostration."

The cloud eyes looked at him for a single moment.

"I have known it all day," said Miss Harvey. "I opened the telegram downstairs when it came this morning."

She turned her head sharply, smiled and sank fainting to the floor.

THE COUNTESS DE CHASSEPIERRE

By HARRIET PRESCOTT SPOFFORD

THE Count de Chassepierre was certainly a delightful gentleman, of polished manners and well instructed mind. He was also a very wealthy one, his vast vineyards and his holdings in the Jura, on whose slopes immense herds of cattle pastured, bringing him in royal revenues. He had come to America to do something about reducing the duty on wines; and he had lingered because he found life gay and novel in New York, and because he had been greatly charmed with the beauty and grace of Alice Byrnes, who had crossed on the same steamer with him and his friend, Professor Ackerman.

The trouble was that Alice Byrnes was not charmed with him.

But that made no difference to her mother. Mrs. Byrnes saw great possibilities in such a marriage. She lay awake nights building castles whose halls her daughter was to tread—castles far finer than the old Chassepierre chateau near the foot of the Jura. She was already a legitimist in her mind, and had the monarchy restored and Alice, Countess de Chassepierre, first lady-in-waiting to the queen, and a power at court; while Alice's laughing mockery of such ideas only fired her fancy to higher flights. It was not that Mrs. Byrnes was so entirely a fool that she could not think of any position too proud for her daughter, and her fond heart was fixed upon placing her on lofty heights; for, although the life at home was fine, to her purview, yet it was perpetual struggle not to be outdone; and there was nothing, positively nothing that could sur-

pass the possibilities of the Countess de Chassepierre.

"It is all the more provoking," said Mrs. Byrnes, "because the Count is so—so—unexceptionable, so all one would wish you to marry. What in the world do you want?"

"Love," said Alice.

"Oh, Alice, you are such a simpleton!"

"In this day and generation?"

"Was Nina Bellaire in love with the man she married? He had some millions, I know."

"Indeed, she was, mamma!"

"And she married him, although she knew he was an opium eater and an absinthe fiend. And just look at the things her children will be! And she not caring! So much for love! But what a picture she was on her wedding day! And you could look so much finer! I can see you now, so tall, your orange flowers in a crown, moving under your priceless veil—for it should be priceless—and glittering in the old Chassepierre diamonds!"

"But, mamma, you surely were in love with papa!"

"And look at the life he led me!" cried Mrs. Byrnes. "And if it wasn't for his dropping on that mine at last, where in the world would I have been? Taking boarders in Placerville today. As for Count Chassepierre, you couldn't help being attached to him after you were married to him."

"Very much attached, mamma."

"And that's all it amounts to, anyway, after a little. And you would be a part of the old French nobility, and in favor with the rightful king, and not

a soul of all these people that I have had to bow down before to equal you! And I know, I know, Alice, that you would accept so great an opportunity if it wasn't for that tedious professor who came over in the same boat—without a penny to his name!"

"Dearest mamma, I have a few pennies of my own, you know. And I can't imagine why you say tedious when you didn't see him at all on the boat, and never see him when he calls here. By the way, did you know he is to have an Oxford D.C.L.? And the Kaiser has sent him a decoration for his researches in—"

"I don't want to hear another word about him! I suppose you'll be marrying him next. I sha'n't be surprised at any silly thing you do."

"At any rate, not till he asks me."

"And that he hasn't done yet, I hope." And if Alice made her mother no reply, it may have been because words failed her. Certainly her mother was exasperating. And certainly the professor was, too, after all her evidence of interest. It humiliated her. She kissed her mother good night and left her to recover from her vexation, to find her usual solace in the real lace of her dressing gown, and to build loftier castles in her dreams.

"But, Alice," said Nina Bellaire, her chief intimate, as they sipped their tea from Mrs. Byrnes's little gold cups late one afternoon, "tell me, is there any one you prefer to the Count?"

"Oh, ever so many!" cried Alice.

Mrs. Bellaire laughed. "Suppose, then, you married this ever so many," she said. "You will go out of this life you love—yes, you know you love it—oh, I must speak frankly, Alice! You will be entirely *déclassée*. There isn't one of our set that wants anything to do with scholars and bookworms and tiresome old professors and that rubbish!"

"Why, Nina, you know you read books and care for intellectual things."

"Oh, I'm an exception. And it wouldn't be tolerated in me if I didn't go so far the other way," said Mrs. Bellaire.

"Well, when I was a roughshod little girl in a far away mining town in the hills, I didn't know there was such a thing as 'our set.' I lived without them then and I can live without them again. If, when money flowed in like a flood, mamma hadn't put me at the school where you chanced to be, I never should have known you or any of the rest. And as for you, I don't believe you'd forget me or ignore me—"

"But you know, Alice, a woman in society is not altogether the mistress of her own actions. I might go to see you privately, or have you come to see me, before or after the season. But it would be impossible for things to be as they were, and only think of the difference if you were the Countess de Chassepierre! Heavens, Alice, how the whole set would kowtow to you! And you don't know anything about the Chassepierre jewels! Why, there's one chain of twenty rubies that Saladin gave Cœur de Lion—in the days, you know, when England was almost all France and Richard held his court there—and so they came down to the Chassepierres."

"How?" asked Alice, as she balanced her tiny gold spoon on the edge of her tiny cup.

"I'm sure I don't know how. It's quite enough that they did come down. And they're redder than the planet Mars, and bigger, too, as he looks in the sky. Think of wearing them at the English Court! For you know he can be ambassador any day you will. And, besides, by inheritance on his mother's side he is an English baronet, anyway. The Chassepierres have an inherited trait of marrying foreigners. And you would have your rights at court there. No apocryphal court—the real thing. And there are no such rubies in the whole British Empire—unless some rajah has hid them away."

"Little old New York is good enough for me."

"There are no such pearls outside the Czar's strong box as—"

"Divorce Bellaire and make them yours, Nina," said Alice.

"You disgraceful girl!"

"Why? Is there anyone you know that isn't divorced, or thinking of being divorced?"

"I know Nina Bellaire. And she isn't."

"Nina Bellaire married for love. As I am going to marry for love, if I ever marry at all!" And for a moment the beautiful dark eyes grew wistful.

"But be reasonable, dear. What is the matter with Chassepierre?"

"Nothing that I know of."

"He admires you tremendously."

"That is not unusual."

"Modesty always was your distinguishing characteristic! He is really very superior."

"I know those more so."

"Lucky girl! But suppose some day you waked and found yourself married to him, found yourself Countess de Chassepierre? Don't you think you could accommodate yourself rather happily to the fact? Don't you believe you could take pleasure in the company of a man who adored you—not at all a bad sort, you know—who gave you social height beyond any of us? For the Counts de Chassepierre have any quantity of princely—yes, princely—Spanish and Italian and Austrian titles that they don't use, being so very Gallic and patriotic."

"Oh, well, when I do," said Alice. "But just now there isn't any title so agreeable to me as that of a plain American woman."

"But you know you're not a plain American woman."

"And no place I would rather live in than the United States. And, to change the subject from my uninteresting affairs—"

"You know I am speaking because I care so very much about you, Alice."

"Oh, that is all right. But did you see Mrs. Vanameer's niece? Isn't she a beauty? When have you seen anything so fresh and sweet? Her eyes make you think of a little trembling cherub's. They do, really. Too bad to bring her into this life."

"Oh, you do see sermons in running

brooks, Alice! I don't know but Chassepierre will have to kidnap you yet!" And Mrs. Bellaire rose impatiently, leaving her cup on the console and moving up the room, stopping now and then on her imperious way and demanding the attention of one and another, and sitting down at last beside Mrs. Byrnes.

The Count de Chassepierre, who had been talking with Mrs. Byrnes, rose with the least air in the world of relief, and after a few words with Mrs. Bellaire, sauntered away and was presently to be seen among the men just then clustering around Alice.

"Mrs. Byrnes," said Mrs. Bellaire, "I have just been telling Alice that we would have to kidnap her. That is, Chassepierre will have to. But there's many a true word spoken in jest, you know. Dear Mrs. Byrnes, what do you say to ordering a trousseau by cable? Everything, you know—a countess's trousseau—not minding expense."

"When did you ever know me to mind expense, Nina?"

"You have your accounts with Paquin, with Francis, with the Fleurie? Silver cloth, point, seed pearls. Let us put our heads together and get the order off tomorrow morning. With management we can have them by the third steamer—hurry call—rush. What if it does cost? What was money made for, Mrs. Byrnes? When they come with the countess's coronet on all that purple and fine linen, I wouldn't wonder if we could dragoon her."

"Oh, 'dragoon' isn't a nice word, Nina."

"Well, then, if we could take her straight to the altar before she knows where she is!"

"Nina," said Mrs. Byrnes, "you are a wonder!"

"No," said Nina, "I am a strategist."

"How fortunate," thought Alice, as she looked at them across the room, "that mamma has forgotten that I learned the lip language when I taught in the deaf and dumb school before the days of the mine. She likes to forget

the happenings of that old time. But what in the world do I want a trousseau for, with no lover, no bridegroom, no husband! I will cable tomorrow to omit that coronet business, anyway." And while her thoughts were buzzing like wasps in her brain, she was hearing young Vonderswell's opinions of his horses, catching the tune from the new opera that Mr. Robinson hummed for her under his breath, as he leaned over her chair, answering old General Bondway's feeble talk of a war scare, and reminding herself of a juggler keeping all the balls in the air at once.

"Look, Mrs. Byrnes," Nina Bellaire was saying. "See the Count standing there by the mantel. Wouldn't you know at a glance that he was a patrician, with the strain of thousands of years of gentle blood in his veins? How fair he is! I wish Bellaire's hair was that gold color; it seems so full of vitality."

"Mr. Bellaire's hair is well enough," said Mrs. Byrnes.

"But it doesn't stand up like a gilded and glorified hair brush!" and Mrs. Bellaire laughed and said good-bye and went to fetch her husband, who had very little hair at all, from his club.

But as she talked, the whole thing seemed so empty to Alice, the gossip, the pleasantries; she was tired to death of it all! She remembered the wild, free life of the mining town and longed for a breath of its mountain air again. And she recalled the conversation with her professor, as they leaned over the ship's side, and the stars painted themselves in flashes in the breaking seas; and the hum about her seemed more vapid still.

Still under this obsession, she went next morning for a walk in the park. The professor often walked there in the early morning too. But why should she be supposed to know that? Her mother had called him old and tedious; then he could not be this tall and dark young man swinging toward her with the gait of an athlete, who turned at her smile and walked along beside her. Well, there was no small talk here. Neither was there any lover's talk.

He was telling her of a school of mines in the silver country of which a friend of his was to take charge. It seemed a coincidence, when she had been so longing for the mountain life, that he should be speaking of it. If only, only, such life were shared—but no, not a word that might not have been cried out from the house tops. But even though he never said the words she waited to hear, it was a comfort to be near him, and she went home almost gay, in spite of an inward mortification at the thought that she loved with no return.

He came into their box that night at the Opera, where Alice sat radiant in her rose-colored gauzes and the gardenia behind her ear, a little shell of an ear, her clear eyes glowing, her tint a creamy pink, a thing all sparkle and blush answering with now and then a shiver to the singular music which both fascinated and repelled from the first cry of "*Ne me touchez pas.*"

"If I knew in the least what it means—" she was saying.

"Suppose we think of it as the pursuit of the ideal," said the professor. "If we touch it we tarnish it, we ruin it."

"Oh, oh! Do you think so?" answered Alice. "But not in real things. Only in fancy."

"Who can tell?" said the professor. "It is a dangerous work to put things to the test."

"He either fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small
That dares not put it to the touch
To gain or lose it all,"

quoted Alice. And to herself she added, "Oh, what is so stupid as a man? He never looks down a byway, and sees only the obvious, what is straight ahead." But what was straight ahead just then was an uncommonly lovely young woman—perhaps the professor could not allow himself to acknowledge it. Was he asking himself was it likely that any young queen of moneydom would give a second thought to a man who considered a position in a far away mountain mining town an enviable one? Was he testing her? Such a thought, it is

true, occurred to Alice, but when, just before the curtain rose again, the Count de Chassepierre came in, the professor made his bow and went out.

"A remarkable man that," said the Count. "One day the world may ring with his name."

"Count!" said Mrs. Byrnes. "And he without a dollar in the world, so to say!"

Perhaps the man at that moment, in spite of a certain amused look, thought that, with the mother-in-law thrown in, he was paying dearly for his whim. And perhaps he himself never looked so attractive to Alice as in that moment of his speaking.

Things move rapidly in the rapid life. The custom house had notified Mrs. Byrnes of the receipt of various invoices and she and Nina Bellaire had attended to them, while breakfasts and dinners and theatre parties and dances followed one another like a chase. The Count was everywhere present at these functions, but if the professor appeared Mrs. Byrnes and Mrs. Bellaire made a barrier about Alice that it was difficult to pass. But Alice grew listless and pale, showed no interest in anything and presently refused any more of the gaieties and took long walks by herself.

"Oh, you don't think, Nina, she is going to work in the slum settlements, or whatever they call them!" cried Mrs. Byrnes. "That will be the last drop. And the Count not even asking for a dot!"

If she had seen Alice that moment walking in the park with a tall and dark young man, who was explaining to her the remarkable habits of one of the leafless foreign shrubs and the apparent intelligence of certain plants, her face animated, rosy, sparkling, she might have had more cause for vexation.

"Oh, how I wish the Count would overtake her with his motor car, in one of her rambles," her mother cried, "and just snatch her up and take her off and marry her out of hand! And yet I do want a glorious wedding!"

"We will do better than that," said

Mrs. Bellaire. "We will have parson and clerk waiting, coax her just to try on the wedding gown and marry her in a twinkling. I'm sure I don't know why I care so much about it—I suppose it's because it's so fit. It's all by way of romance, and we have so little romance, and Alice is so ideal for it all. I feel as though I were making history. And then the Count—every time I take his hand and look in his face under that aureole of yellow hair I feel the pulse of a hundred generations of power and rule, and it really seems to me as if he were a little superior clay to all these others. Only, if these others heard me! It is so impossible not to recognize the difference between noble and plebeian blood. See the superb superiority of the man over that—that professor, for instance! He's well enough in his way, of course, but it's only a common way."

"You are too romantic, Nina."

"A little romance is the spice of life."

Mrs. Bellaire was, however, too sure, as well as too romantic. There had been in the night what is called a Scotch mist, settling on every twig and spray, followed by a slight snowfall; but the morning was clear sunlight. Alice had ordered the carriage, and after a call on a maid, who was ill in a hospital, had gone into a print shop and was turning over some shells, when she heard a voice that nowadays made her feel as if her heart were trembling. The professor was speaking to someone who had been telling him of the beauty of a snow scene in the Bronx at sunrise that day. Almost at once he left his acquaintance, and was beside her.

"If it is so very unusual, why should we not see it ourselves?" she said.

"Even if the dew of the morning is gone," he answered.

"The carriage is here," she said. "Will you come?"

It was a long drive and it did seem as if her companion might have found something else to talk about than the country round the chateau of the Count de Chassepierre, with which it seemed that the professor was well

acquainted. "It is a fine hunting country, too," he said. "The chamois, the wild boar—"

"And you also are fond of hunting?"

"Extremely. When there is a spice of danger."

"Oh! I hadn't thought you like those English who say, 'What a fine day! Let us go out and kill something.'"

"I am like no Englishman," was the reply.

"Well," she said at last, "is there anything in the country of the Chassepierre to equal the beauty of this view?"

They had left the carriage, and walking through a bit of wood had come out on a spot overlooking a plain where every tree and shrub was sparkling with frozen drops like myriads of radiant jewels, while over all the wide expanse of melting violet below a silver mist hung like a filmy veil.

"It is enchanted!" he said. "So I have seen it from Arboicvaux in the Jura."

"Oh, can you think of nothing but Count de Chassepierre's detestable possessions?"

"Why are they detestable?"

"Because they are his," she exclaimed.

"But do you not find him a pleasant gentleman?"

"Oh, possibly."

"But what then? Is he not well bred, well mannered, accomplished, learned—"

"Oh, why are you like everyone else? Why are you, *you*, praising him to me? He may be all that—but—but—" and anger and shame and sorrow overcame her. It was all more than she could bear; she burst into tears. "He may be all you say," she sobbed, "but he is not the man I love!"

"Tell me, Alice, tell me, is there another? Is it that you love me?" And two arms were about her, and she was taken and held close to a beating heart. They did not know that it was winter then, that the day was chill, that the rising wind was blowing the frozen drops from the boughs; they were in

the land of everlasting summer, the paradise where only lovers walk.

"It is fortunate that you ordered that trousseau, mamma," said Alice, as she sat by the drawing-room fire that night, the dinner guests having just gone.

"Why—how—dear, dear—how do you know anything about any trousseau? And why is it fortunate?"

"Because I am going to be married at once."

"You—are—going to be married?"

"To the man you think so tedious."

"Alice! Alice Byrnes! I—I can't believe you!" And then, her mind glancing off like a bird, "But it is a countess's trousseau!" she exclaimed.

"It can be made to do very well for a professor's wife, mamma."

Mrs. Byrnes would have fainted then and there had not wrath and curiosity stimulated her heart to action. "And Nina Bellaire—" she began.

"Will not be asked to the wedding. She has troubled herself with my affairs quite enough. But she has a very pretty taste, and I have no doubt the things she has made you order are perfect."

"Where, oh, where, is my dutiful daughter gone?"

"Here she is mamma!" cried Alice, springing up and throwing her arms round her mother's neck and clinging to her with laughing and tears. "And here is her mother who would rather have her happy than great!"

"Oh, but you might have been both if you had married—"

"The Count de Chassepierre," announced the butler. And the dark young man with the athletic tread came quickly up the room and took Mrs. Byrnes's unwilling hand.

"If I should tell you, madam, that I had practiced a slight deceit, would you forgive me? Dear one," as he turned to Alice, "would you forgive me?"

"I—I don't know what you mean," faltered Alice.

"It is this," he said. "When I first saw you as we crossed, I said that you

and no other should be my wife. But not without the love I now feel sure you have given me. Ackerman, who was on board with me, my old friend of university days, changed identities with me. He is a charming fellow, indisputably, and needs no factitious titles. You have longed, I have heard you say, for the free mountain air. You will have it on the slopes of the Jura. For, whether you like it or not, since you have promised to be my wife, when you turn away from the altar with me you will be the Countess de Chassepierre."

"Are you not taking a great deal for granted?" exclaimed Alice, retreating with a sparkle of indignant spirit.

"Will it really make any difference to you?" he pleaded, with outstretched hands. "Am I not the man you loved this morning? Do you love me less tonight? Do name and titles signify between our two souls?"

She turned from rosy red to deathly pale. "I am afraid—I am afraid," she murmured. But her lover's arms were about her.

"Fear nothing, dearest one," he whispered, "while we are together!"

"Oh," cried Mrs. Byrnes, at last in an ecstasy. "This is exactly what I have wished!" and she quite believed she spoke the truth. "And to think Nina Bellaire was so sure she knew the difference between plebeian and noble blood!"



ON THE DESERT

By JAMES BRANNIN

WITH faces pale and fevered as a morn,
 Breathless as gray, of later sullen spring,
 When summer swims in on a drowsy wing,
 We walk our lonely way, athirst and worn.
 Once we had deemed this Love a sweeter thing
 With subtle joys to make us less forlorn.
 But see these faded hopes, this bitter scorn!
 For Love has cast us down for worshipping.
 Twine round my heart thy fingers weak and wan.
 My blood is still and pulseless, and the span
 Of little clinging hands can wreak no ill.
 Ah, wilder anguish! I had dreamed this past;
 That Love's long rankling wound had healed at last.
 But draw not forth the arrow; let it kill.



TO deal honestly with others is not so difficult. To compel others to deal honestly with you—that is power.

THE PROFESSION OF POET

By RICHARD LE GALLIENNE

ANYONE who has ever received a cheque in payment for a poem must surely have been struck by the incongruity of the transaction; and again, if he made any note of the manner in which he spent that cheque, he must have been still further impressed by the fantastic nature of a calling which thus brings him to market with such merchandise for such payment. Mummy has indeed become merchandise and Pharaoh is sold for balsams.

Literary history records with dramatic unction the pitiful sums paid by antiquity for its masterpieces. A paltry twenty-six pounds for "Paradise Lost"! We raise our hands in pious judgment upon a preposterous past. There is latent in our surprise the assumption that, say, a million dollars would have been about right. It does not occur to us to be surprised that Milton was paid anything at all—paid for his sidereal song in the copper coinage of our mortality. And, so far as I know, no literary historian has attempted to trace what became of the money thus grudgingly and fantastically disbursed, though, indeed, I can imagine no more fascinating matter for speculative inquiry. How did Shakespeare spend the proceeds of "Hamlet"? What did Keats do with the money he received for "Endymion," and what did he buy with the "Ode to a Grecian Urn"? Yes! What *did* the Vintner buy?

To settle a gas bill or pay something on account to a butcher seems a sorry destination for money earned by the aspiration of the soul or the tumult of the heart; but it is, of course, only the

other half of the paradox of having been paid in money at all.

Byron was, of course, right in refusing—at first—to accept money for his poetry, and telling Murray, so to say, to "keep the change." Murray was a publisher. Publishers are tradesmen, and it is proper for tradesmen to make money. That is why they are tradesmen. A poet is different. It is not his business to make money, but to make poetry—and to live as best he can. The world can neither give to him nor take away. All the real giving is on his side, and there is no question in his case of remuneration or reward. The world has nothing he values. If it choose, it can make offerings to him as to its gods, or bring to him tithes of corn and wine as to its priests, or it can crown him with symbolic laurel; but the rewards of the world are for the children of the world, and to the poet its honors are ridiculous. The world, of course, does its best when it confers a knighthood upon one of its poets, but such a proceeding is none the less absurd. It might as well array him in a Masonic apron, or hang the cross of the Legion of Honor around the neck of a nightingale.

They understood this matter better in the old East. The poets of Shah and Sultan were rewarded with milk-white horses from the royal stables, mules laden with silks and precious stones, rose gardens and beautiful slaves; and Hafiz records of one of his odes,

So well I sang it, Heaven's Lord
Tossed me from Heaven as reward
The small change of the Pleiades.

The surprise with which the poet receives his earthly cheque for his

immaterial merchandise—can it be a real cheque, a cheque liable to be honored this side the moon?—is of a piece with his whole relation to society, to the world in which he so strangely finds himself—a stranger. The poet is the real man in the moon, that came down too soon, and is always asking his way—to the moon. He is, so to speak, a phantom in fleshly garb, an inspired specter, embodied for a while for mystic purposes of divine speech; and even to the gross sense of the world there is a suspicion of the supernatural about him, and about his life even an air of romantic miracle. In fact, he is the romantic soul of man consciously embodied and articulate. He is and does "what some men dream of all their lives." What mankind at large sees but in a glass darkly he sees face to face. The opaque commonplaces of human experience are for him constantly diaphanous with the creative light that first made and is forever making all things. To him man, beneath all his fractional disguises and parochial activities, is all the time a mysterious spirit, a being of mysterious destiny, a ghostly creature of infinite portent, his life a witchcraft thing of magic joy and magic sorrow. Beneath the dusty surface of "days and things diurnal," he is aware of the flowing and weaving and singing and weeping of the radiant tragic forces of the sibylline universe. He is the visionary of the Vision. He is the dreamer, at one with the dream. The earth he treads is to him a star, vibrating with radiance. He feels the stellar light breaking from beneath his feet, through all its rocky crust; he hears its planetary song, star to star, across the holy gulfs of space. He is lonely—and yet never alone, filled with awe—yet never afraid, an atom—and yet an immensity, homeless—and yet so strangely at home. For, tiptoe on the little hill of our mortal life, he has seen the white presences upon the peaks and heard the voices of the eternal gods.

It is the fascination of the poet's life—and also its fascination for the sympathetic onlooker—that he thus con-

sciously lives all his days this dual existence, inhabitant of two worlds at once, free at once of the gates of ivory and horn. In the crowded avenue he is walking upon moonbeams; the gods beckon him at street corners; in the close packed car he talks with spirits, and in the roaring vortices of traffic he is deep in the heart of the ancient wood.

From this duality of his nature, his life must often wear the aspect of paradox, for in his experience, in his personal history, he is seen to be at once so passionately human and so impersonally detached from humanity. Everything that happens to him seems to happen in two ways at once—to him as an individual, and to him, so to say, as a comic spectator. He lives his joys and sorrows with an ardor and emphasis perhaps keener than that of other men, and at the same time stands aloof from them, as mysterious and poignant phenomena thrilling with an infinite pathos and significance. When he loves, the face he loves is not merely a beautiful human face, but the embodied mystery of all beauty:

Sometimes thou seemest not as thyself alone,

But as the meaning of all things that are.

Death to him is not merely his own personal loss, but the universal tragic enigma of existence. He is at once the most personal and the least personal of beings, and his actions and happenings are curiously magnified and diminished at the same moment and from the same cause—at once "big with eternity" and small by cosmic comparison. Hence in his life a strange ardor keeps company with a strange coldness, and with both goes ever a strange sadness—the sadness that sits mysteriously at the heart of all joy, the sadness of beautiful music, of lovely faces, the sadness of flowers and stars, the sadness of young laughter and running water.

Of course, all reflective natures are thus touched with starlight, "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," but with the majority such reflectiveness is only occasional, intermittent. For the most part they are, so to say, completely and comfortably embodied.

They live in one world at a time, and for them human institutions have a concrete importance and an opaque stability. Their lives are lived absolutely, not relatively. To all their transactions they bring a single-minded seriousness, entirely of this world. Their interests or ambitions are never thwarted or dismayed by the sneer or the sigh of the Infinite. The constitutions and conventions of society are to them serious matters, and banks and churches and clubs and armies and navies seem to them as real as wild flowers.

The poet, however, is only partially embodied. Hence, doubtless, the frequent discomfort of his lot. He would seem to have been only so far incarnated as is necessary for him to share, and, sharing, to interpret and transfigure, the common life of man. His bodily organization seems still conscious of the spiritual processes of its making, and he would seem to wear it with a certain immortal carelessness, as being but one of his innumerable transformations; a spirit clothed for a time as from a magic wardrobe, in the raiment of humanity. Thus the poet's life on earth is naturally one of much bewilderment and misunderstanding to his fellow mortals, whom he so curiously resembles, and from whom he so mysteriously differs. Living the same life as others, he lives it in such a different way, throws the emphasis so differently, gives it here and there such fantastic values, answers to such odd standards and observes such invisible laws.

Out on this fellow who lives as he pleases in a respectable world—who blasphemes our gods, outrages our moralities, mocks our decencies and laughs at our honors! And yet how strangely he understands our hearts! Little as we know him, how well he knows us! There is nothing we have felt or thought or done, but you will find it in his book; no joy, no sorrow, no hope or fear, but he has for it a song.

Yes, the poet is the universal sympathizer, the friend of all the world.

A Greek poet compared himself to a scrivener:

Love songs I write for him and her,
Now this, now that, as Love dictates;
One birthday gift alone the Fates
Gave me, to be Love's Scrivener.

The image is a good one. Yes, the poet is a scrivener of life. He sits in the market place and writes to the dictation of Life. He writes our love letters, and he writes our letters of mourning. In a sense, he even writes our business letters. He not only writes for us, but tells us what to say, for he often knows what we mean better than we know ourselves. Professor of a strange craft, he sits there watching the stream of life, listening to its sad-glad murmur, at once carried along in it and yet seated aloof on its banks. A strange profession indeed, none stranger.

The poet writes our letter for us, and we pay him his modest fee and go our ways. Sometimes, though not often, we give a passing thought to his way of life. What manner of man is he in his private hours? Probably he drinks and beats his wife! Or, perhaps, in secret he is an anarchist, or devoted to base pleasures! You have heard it whispered that he is a murderer, takes drugs and has very singular religious ideas . . . A strange character! But, anyway, he writes a beautiful hand, and has a wonderful way of saying things.

A word here concerning that side of the poetic nature which is so sore a stumbling block to so many good souls. Doubtless, the poet is a messenger of the gods, but for one of divine origin he has an astonishing addiction to earthly pleasures. More than most he is susceptible to the orgiastic call of the senses and the gross delights of the flesh. This song thrillingly pure as of a bird at dawn was in all probability written in the gutter. The temple frequented by this priest of Apollo is too often the pothouse, and the company kept by this fine spirit is infrequently that of old maids and college professors. For,

. . . half a beast is the great god Pan,
To laugh as he sits by the river,
Making a poet out of a man:

The true gods sigh for the cost and pain,
For the reed which grows nevermore again,
As a reed with the reeds in the river.

The reference to Pan helps, I think, to clear up matters. Pan is unmistakably the father of poets, and Pan, it is to be feared, is a god who is not always to be found in full evening dress and in perfect taste. Like that nature which he personifies, he is apt to offend in the society of squeamish and dainty persons. He is often found lacking in "refinement," as understood in drawing-rooms and seminaries. His exquisite products are usually brought about by processes quite coarse and shocking to refined individuals. The birth of the violet, fairy child of the gross earth, can hardly be mentioned to ears polite, and good society silently ignores the roots of the rose.

*Fortunatus et ille deos qui novit agrestes,
Panaque silvanumque senam Nymphasque
sorores,*

sings Virgil, but, blessed companions as the country gods may be, Pan and old Silvanus and the Nymph Sisters can hardly be called respectable.

The fact, however, is that those aberrations of the poet which perplex and offend a circumspect world come not of his depravity, but of his innocence; not of his lack of refinement, but of his possession of a refining power to which his critics are strangers.

Into that lap that brings the rose
Shall I with shuddering fall,

cries George Meredith, in a phrase of profound spiritual insight; and the same reassuring alchemy which we thus see at work in Nature's bosom is one of the mysterious powers of the poet's heart. To him there is literally nothing common and unclean, no such thing as "dead matter," no such thing as "gross earth," no such thing as "flesh without spirit"; and it is by this gift of passionate vitality, one with Nature's own, that white fire of living that is in him, that he is able to transmute even the death and dross of things into "something rich and strange," by the purity of his heart to see all things pure, by the sensitive temper of his clay to hear all things singing.

That he is no saint, that he often treads a wayward wanton path, like the rest of us, is but to say that he is a fellow sinner, a joint inheritor of the Fall; but even at the worst, there is about his sinning a childlike irresponsibility, an essential innocence of wrong intent, that differentiate it from the grown up sinning of more worldly natures. His sins are not sins of the bad heart or of the selfish spirit, but sins of that excess of sensibility, "too avid of earth's bliss," which, after all, is one of the conditions of his being a poet at all; sins against himself—poor wretch!—rather than against others.

Yes, "the cost and pain!" We may well sigh for that. The profession of a poet is a tragic one—as painful and tragic as motherhood. That "making a poet out of a man" is a mysteriously painful business. Is there no other way? "No way but this," would seem to be Nature's answer. Yet where is the mother that would renounce her motherhood? And where is the poet—though he be a Dante walking the circles of Hell or a Villon weaving ballades in the shadow of the gallows, be he starving in a garret or the outcast of some imperious love or the victim of some inexorable poison—where is the poet that would change his lot for any other? Always, with Virgil again, he exclaims:

*Me vero primum dulces ante omnia Musæ,
Quarum sacra fero ingenti percussus amore,
Accipiant, cælique, vias et sidera monstrent
Defectus solis varios lunaque labores. . . .*

"Me indeed," is ever his cry, "first and before all things may the sweet muses, whose priest I am and whose great love hath smitten me, take to themselves and show me the pathways of the sky, the stars and the diverse eclipses of the sun, and the moon's travails . . ."

A tragic, but how lovely and pleasant a calling! His task to read the ways of heaven and the hearts of men, and to write down all he reads in fair-faced, sweet-voiced words that come to him singing strangely out of the air; words shaped like flowers and fragrant like honey, words like the rustle of

woodlands or the rising of the moon, words swift as birds and rooted as the mountains, words stern as bronze and soft as tears.

Yes, "the cost and the pain!" But if the poet have his sorrows, he has, too, his words—his beautiful words; and they seem to him worth all his sorrows. For as Landor has said, "Poets are in general prone to melancholy; yet the most plaintive ditty hath imparted a fuller joy, and of longer duration, to its composer, than the conquest of Persia to the Macedonian."

Magic consolation. Who shall explain it?

And always, too, be he a Virgil crowned with Augustan laurel, or a Verlaine in the slums of Paris, or a Francis Thompson sleeping under London Bridge, he carries with him the knowledge of sublime distinction, of a romantic destiny. Sin-stained and sorrowful, hungry and in mean raiment, yet is he high of heart and proud of glance, for is he not Nature's confidant? Is he not a servant of the gods?



A WOMAN'S WAY

By STOKELY S. FISHER

SHE mocks at me—her coquetry
 A merry mask for modesty.
 She knows my every nerve will feel
 Resistlessly the shy appeal
 Wooing in witching raillery.

So delicately maidenly,
 With gaily radiant flippancy—
 Love's deeps with ripples to conceal—
 She mocks at me.

Beneath the moon how frank was she,
 Honest, from all disguises free,
 And wholly mine for woe or weal;
 I felt my soul before her kneel—
 How slyly now, in roguish glee,
 She mocks at me!



A WOMAN is as old as she looks before she is dressed to go out.

A HOUSE TO LET

By MARY MULLETT

AT the sound of her husband's step on the stairs little Mrs. Thorne half started up from the couch where, for an hour or more, she had lain huddled among the cushions. Then, seeming to recall herself, she sank back and lay quite still, with wistful, timid eyes watching her door, which stood ajar.

The familiar step came along the corridor, passed on, then hesitated and turned back.

"Edith!"

There was a note of uncertainty in Thorne's voice.

"Yes."

"May I come in?"

"Oh, John, *please* come!" cried his wife; and the waiting tenseness which had been in her face and attitude went out of them in one deep breath.

As she came to meet him, holding out her hands appealingly, she looked to Thorne like a wide-eyed, frightened child. He saw that her lip quivered—for all the world just like a baby's—and suddenly the old tenderness filled and warmed him.

Yes, the old tenderness. It gave him a little shock of surprise, this sudden flame from a fire which had seemed dead. He had been so sure it was dead. Over and over again, during the past few months, he had tried conscientiously to rekindle the old passion, the old sweetness, in his love for his wife.

But love has a strange and uncomfortably stubborn way of smoldering so long as it is fed only with the dampening fuel of conscientious efforts. And Thorne, perfunctorily stirring the ashes on the old altar in his heart, had found there no answering sign.

It is the heart of man which cannot serve two masters. The altar of God and the altar of Mammon stand over against each other, and the fires of one grow cold as those of the other kindle. So in the glow of the new flame, which leaped and sang with a hot fury that blinded him, Thorne had stirred now and then the ashes on the old altar and had found them—cold.

A fevered dream those weeks seemed, now that he looked back on them—a dream from which he had been roused by a storm that had rent his sky. Dread and repulsion had beaten upon that new, leaping flame. And Thorne, shaking with mortal chill after those weeks of fever, had found that not only was the fire gone from the new altar, but that the very altar itself, insubstantial and foundationless, lay in ruins.

He was too dazed, too stunned at first, for more than an instinctive creeping back to the old temple. He did not try, conscientiously or otherwise, to rekindle its fires. But he was glad to be back. Of that much he was conscious. And he crept close to the old altar, glad of its purity, glad of the firm foundation which five years of married life had given it, glad—yes, he was glad—that the other was only a ruin.

And now came the surprise of this rekindling of the fires he had thought dead. It was not pity. It was not remorse. It was not that he was telling himself he had been a brute. He had called himself that a hundred times during those three months, when the pain in his wife's eyes had

been a constant reproach to him. It had been the only reproach she had ever let him feel, but it had not stirred him.

This was different. His heart swelled now with both pity and remorse, but they did not leave him coldly uncomfortable, vaguely irritated, as they had before. With a sudden rush of tenderness, his heart warmed to his wife. He looked at her with the eyes of a year ago, and she was dear now, as she had been then. He was conscious of a great thankfulness for the thrill of happiness that went through him as he took her in his arms.

Then the happiness turned to a cold, questioning fear as she buried her face on his shoulder and clung tremblingly to him.

It could not be that she had found out! Thorne felt a furious resentment at the very possibility. Now that the affair had come to an end—to so hideous, so complete an end—he rebelled at the irony of a fate which might make this dead and gone thing a living misery to her. He tried to reassure himself by thinking that she could not have found out or she would not have turned to him this way.

And yet she might. Incredible as it might have been in another woman, he could easily conceive of her coming to him for help to bear the very pain he had given her. Poor child! Where else could she turn?

That madness which had possessed Thorne for a time was a horror to him now; and there could be no shadow of justice, he told himself, in letting it cast its blight over his wife. He knew that the change in him had hurt and bewildered her. He was afraid that even her childlike innocence had sometimes doubted the entire accountability of those demands of business, which he had alleged by way of explaining that change. But he had believed that, at most, she feared nothing more positive than a growing indifference on his part.

Even that had been enough to keep a constant, half-wondering pain in her eyes; a pain which was a two-pointed

sword now, stabbing both ways, sheathing itself in his heart as surely as in hers. He had met that piteous, questioning look too often for him to cheat himself into the belief that she was unconscious and unscathed.

But he had been sure that she did not dream of what had really happened. He rebelled fiercely now at the thought of it; an honest rebellion from letting her suffer, not merely from being himself found out. He determined to protect her from that pain if he possibly could. And there was a keen watchfulness in his eyes as he smoothed her hair.

"Why, little one," he said, "what's the matter?"

She spoke with little catches of her breath, more than ever like the frightened child she had seemed to him.

"Oh, John, I've had—such a dreadful—experience!"

The watchfulness deepened in his eyes as he drew her to a chair.

"Tell us all about it, little girl."

"It was—dreadful."

"Oo-oo-ooh, dreadful!" he said with exaggerated emphasis.

It was an echo from their old laughing, whimsical ways with each other, and Thorne almost feared she could hear the beating of his heart as he waited to see how she would respond.

He thought she held her breath a moment. Then she put her hand—such a ridiculously dimpled, babyish hand—up to his lips; and he caught and kissed it and held it there—tight—lest she feel his lips tremble against it.

"Too dreadful for words?" he asked, after a pause.

"Most!"

"Then let's not think about it. Let's go and have a lark and forget all about it."

She shivered.

"Oh, please let me tell you, John! I can't stop thinking about it. And somehow it frightens me."

"Poor little chicken! There, cuddle down and let's hear it."

She gave a contented little sigh as she settled herself.

"It was this afternoon," she began. "I was so—"

She checked herself, but Thorne mentally finished the sentence. Yes, she must have been—"so unhappy and lonely."

"I didn't know just what to do with myself," she substituted, "so I went over to the park to walk it off—I mean, just to walk, you know."

Thorne held her a little closer as he told himself that he had been a blind brute.

She was silent a moment. Then, with apparent irrelevance, she timidly whispered:

"I saw a dandelion, John."

It was another note from the old gay harmony of their life together; a call to him to remember—what he had forgotten for the first time since their marriage—that they always had a wager of a dinner over the discovery of the first dandelion in the park. Year by year they had made the search in company. And this year he had forgotten.

"I call that taking an unfair advantage," he declared. "It doesn't count unless we're together. You'll have to wait till tomorrow and go with me. I will have my rights. I don't believe it's anywhere near time for dandelions; but any flower with a grain of sense would be sure to pop right up if it heard you coming."

She laughed softly, as if she feared to break into a happy dream. He knew that she was alive to the change in him, and he wished he could make it less abrupt. But the gladness of finding himself warm with love of her would not let him be shrewdly calculating.

"Then why did I see only one dandelion?" she demanded.

"Oh, that's easy! Even the flowers can't always hear people with such absurdly small feet."

He picked up one of her little slippers, which sat discreetly poking their toes under the edge of the couch beside them. To his amazement she shivered again and put her hand before her eyes.

"Oh, John, there were slippers—there!"

"Slippers! Where? What do you mean?"

"There! In that dreadful place!"

"See here, Edith, tell me just what has happened," commanded Thorne. "Where have you been?"

"It was that house you liked," she explained. "The one over in Seventy-fourth Street, across the park. You remember, John. Don't you know, we were walking together over there several weeks ago? And you kept looking at the house—and finally, when I asked you about it, you said you were just thinking how pleasant it must be and how conveniently located and—"

Thorne's face had settled into rigid lines as she spoke, and there was a look in his eyes which frightened her.

"You do remember, don't you?" she pleaded. "Please don't be angry. I wanted to do something to please you—and show that I remembered—when you liked anything."

The pleading, broken sentences told something of the tragic labyrinth through which she had been groping, clutching piteously at any possible clue of escape.

"I wanted"—her glance was half proud, half apologetic—"I wanted to be useful to you."

At another time he might have smiled. Now it was almost more than he could do to force himself to speak.

"Yes, dear, I remember."

"Please don't be angry," she went on. "I hadn't any idea at all of going to the house when I started. I was just walking, without really thinking where I was, when a boy almost ran into me as he turned to go up some steps. And when I looked after him I found I was in front of the house you had liked so much. The boy stopped to try some keys in the door, and then I saw that he had a big 'To Let' card with him, and that the shades were down and the house closed."

She stopped and looked appealingly at him.

"Why do you look at me that way, John? I haven't done anything wrong, have I?"

He forced himself to smile at her reassuringly.

"No, dear, of course not. Tell me the rest. What did you do?"

"I asked the boy if the house was empty. He said yes, it had been vacated only a few days ago, and did I want to see it? I—you see, John, I didn't have time to think much, so I said I would. And we went in together."

Thorne tried not to catch his breath so sharply.

"It was dark inside," said his wife, "and when the boy raised the shades, I was surprised to find that the house was furnished. But the boy said he thought the furniture was for sale, or something; he didn't seem to know exactly. But he said he was pretty sure it wouldn't have to be taken by the new tenants; so I thought I might as well look at the house.

"The drawing-room—it was all right, I guess. There were lots of beautiful things in it, but nothing really extraordinary about it—except—for a queer feeling—" She frowned, as if trying to fix an elusive idea. "It seemed like a clock that had just stopped. Just stopped for a minute, you know. And you found yourself listening for the people to come back and to go on with their living there. It felt as if they might just have gone upstairs for a moment, or in to dinner, or were hiding behind the curtains—watching you.

"The piano was open and there was a piece of music on the rack. And there was an open book lying face downward on a chair. And a magazine with a fan stuck in it to keep the place, on the table. And flowers—everywhere—all withered."

Mrs. Thorne looked straight ahead of her, as if she were describing something she still actually saw. Thorne, in his turn, did not take his eyes from his wife's face.

"It *felt* so strange," she went on. "I couldn't shake off the impression that somebody, or something, had reached in, as you would take hold of a pendulum, and stopped the life

of the house—short! The boy felt it too, I think; and after the very first neither of us said a word. Just listened—as if there had been something we might hear. Finally we went upstairs together."

Thorne gripped the arm of his chair. His wife still stared straight before her.

"It was dark up there too, so I waited at the door of the front room while the boy felt his way to the windows and raised the shades. It was a big room," she went on, almost as if to herself. "A big room, with an alcove opening from it. And in the middle was a table where people had been playing cards. But the table was upset and the cards were strewn all over the floor. On a chair there was a tray—with a siphon and bottles and glasses. Some of them had been knocked off and broken, and the pieces were in little heaps. There were withered flowers there too, and a great vase of red roses had been thrown down from the mantel and had shivered into a thousand pieces on the hearth.

"The room must have been beautiful, in a vivid sort of way, before—before *that*. It was all rose color and gold and white; with mirrors—ever so many mirrors—and lots of exquisite things. You knew at once that the woman who had lived there had been beautiful. No one but a beautiful woman would dare to have such a room.

"But it wasn't beautiful now. It was terrible! It seemed as if something fierce—and deadly—had *pushed* into the place and torn the life from it."

The fancy was so real to her that she shivered.

"The hangings which had shut off the alcove were torn down at one side and the satin coverlet had been dragged from the bed in there and was trailing clear out into the main room. There was a negligee, all silk and lace, in a rumpled heap at the side of the bed, and a slipper—a high-heeled satin slipper—just where it had fallen from the woman's foot."

There was silence for a moment.

Then Mrs. Thorne turned to her husband.

"I can't make you understand," she said, "how strange and terrifying it all seemed. Where were the people who had been drinking and playing and—then—fighting and struggling in that room such a little while ago? I felt as if it were some uncanny dream and I *must* wake up soon. I kept listening, too. It seemed as if the house was holding its breath till the people should suddenly come back and everything go on again.

"The boy and I stood across the room from each other, and for a long time—or it seemed a long time—we didn't say anything. Then he came across to me and I tried to speak. But I only whispered:

"Where is she?"

"And he said, 'I don't know.'

"Did she die?' I asked him.

"No," he said; 'they took her away—raving crazy!'"

It was Thorne who shivered now, but his wife did not notice.

"What made her go crazy?' I asked.

"I don't know," he said. 'I guess they do—pretty often.'

"Oh, John!" she cried, burying her face on his shoulder. "I can't stop seeing that room—and hearing that boy—and thinking—"

Thorne moistened his dry lips. Then he spoke tenderly, reassuringly, to her.

"But it was dreadful, wasn't it?" she asked, looking up at him.

"Yes. It was—dreadful."

After a moment he asked:

"Was there—anything more?"

"No. At first it seemed as if I couldn't move from the place. As soon as I could we came away."

"And the boy told you nothing more?"

"Only that he had heard at the office that the woman fought like a—devil, he said. She bit the doctor's hand; and another man's wrist was cut so that he bled frightfully. The boy wanted to look for the blood stains, but I wouldn't stay, and I think he was afraid for he came out with me."

The watchfulness with which Thorne

had listened to the beginning of his wife's story had come back as she finished. There was a worried look in his eyes; and although they sat for some time, talking of other things, his face was still troubled. When his wife rather reluctantly said it was time to dress for dinner Thorne rose with a preoccupied air which brought the shadow back to her eyes.

In the library after dinner, however, the unmistakable ring of tenderness in his voice and the old touch of playfulness in his manner made her forget even the shock of the afternoon's experience.

As for her attitude toward him, there was a delicate timidity in all she did, as if she wanted to assure him that she claimed nothing from him. And Thorne, who saw himself unspeakably degraded by all that had happened, and would gladly have knelt to her for forgiveness, accepted rather the penance of holding up his head before her, for her sake, that she might not know and, knowing, suffer.

Both of them were annoyed when the outer bell rang. And Thorne, already rather pale, went a little whiter when the servant announced:

"Dr. Fenton."

A swift glance passed between the two men as the visitor came in, and it occurred to Thorne that there was a reflection in Fenton's eyes of his own irritation.

"Pardon me," said the doctor as he offered his left hand to Mrs. Thorne. "My right hand is out of commission just now, thanks to the somewhat sharp teeth of a refractory patient."

Mrs. Thorne gave him a startled look, and there was a distinct pause before she returned his greeting. Then as she passed her husband, her fingers tightened on his arm in a quick, fierce, reminding clutch.

Thorne's face contracted, as if with sudden pain. But he only set his lips and sank into a chair. While Fenton talked on nervously, Thorne sat silent, wondering what excuse he could make to be alone with the physician. For he knew, from that sharp pain in his arm, that he must manage it—and quickly.

But his brain seemed paralyzed under a weight of dread and he was still vacantly wondering what he should do when his wife bent toward him with a low cry:

"John! What is *that*, John?"

She pointed to his hand, lying limp across his knee. The half-closed fingers made a little cup of the palm, and Thorne stared dumbly at a red trickle from his wrist leading to a dark pool in that hollow cup. It was Fenton who spoke first.

"That wound is open again!" he exclaimed, springing up.

With quick dexterity he took off Thorne's coat and turned the shirt sleeve away from the bandage, which showed a sodden red spot.

"You'd better go," Fenton said gently to Mrs. Thorne.

She shook her head.

"Then will you ring for a servant, please? I shall need some things."

As his wife crossed the room to the bell, Thorne looked at the physician.

"For God's sake," he whispered, "say something that will keep her from knowing!"

Fenton's face hardened.

"Not to save me!" Thorne entreated. "Don't you understand, man? It's not for me. It's for *her* sake."

In silence Fenton removed the bandages. The stitches had not torn out, as he had feared. It was Mrs. Thorne's fierce clutch of her husband's arm which had started the bleeding, but Thorne was the only one who knew that. His wife's mind was too full of a sudden terrified matching together of facts and circumstances to think of anything else. Still, with a pluck and a tenderness which stirred both men to wonder, she helped the doctor, hampered by his own injured hand, in re-bandaging the ugly wound.

At last it was done, and Fenton straightened up with the professional "There!" of satisfaction. He fumbled with the bandages a moment, as if thinking over the work.

"Don't go to dropping any more tumblers and smashing them as you catch them," he said. "You might

have cut an artery. We decided we wouldn't take chances on letting you be worried about it, Mrs. Thorne, for there was nothing to worry over. So don't look so concerned. I had another case this week," he went on reflectively, "that was a good deal like yours, Thorne. My refractory patient didn't confine her attentions to me. She gave a man a slash across the wrist pretty nearly in the same place as yours. Cases often come that way. I've had three cases of the same kind within a single week and then not another one like them for six months. Seem to go in groups. Curious, isn't it?"

Mrs. Thorne had listened with an absorbed, thirsting look in her eyes. When Fenton finished she knelt impulsively beside her husband, and under pretense of examining the bandage she bent and kissed it.

Fenton turned away, a flash of contemptuous anger in his face. Almost immediately he said good night and Thorne, getting rather unsteadily to his feet, went with him to the door. The two men stood on the steps a moment or two before Thorne broke the awkward silence between them.

"It was good of you," he said at length. "Of course I know you did it for her sake, and it is for her sake I thank you."

Fenton turned on him passionately.

"I don't want your thanks!" he said. "If I could have hurt you without hurting her, I'd have done it—and been glad to. It's wrong—cruelly wrong, that you should go scot free. I wish—"

He turned and ran down the steps, as if he dared not trust himself to say anything more. Thorne's haggard eyes followed him as he strode away.

His wife's voice in the hall roused him.

"You won't take cold in your arm, will you?" she asked timidly.

And Thorne, choking back something which was half a sob and half a curse at himself, turned to the hardest part of his penance: the meeting, without flinching, of that look of trust in her eyes, that she might not know and suffer.

THE TRICK OF TIME

By FEDERICO MARIANI

"HALF past eight, sir."

The gentleman to whom the announcement was made rose from the table, upon which dinner had just been served, and walked slowly into the next room. He was a splendid looking man slightly past the fifties.

"Coat and hat," ordered the gentleman, standing before the mirror and giving a careful glance at his attire. He had been very exacting with his valet that evening. The making of the tie, the choice of the cuff links and other trifling details of a man's toilet had assumed an unusual importance on that particular occasion.

The valet was at a loss. He had waited on the gentleman for nearly fifteen years and he had never met with any trouble in the exercise of his duties; a thorough English-bred valet whose time had been entirely devoted to the study of his master's whims and moods. But that evening the poor fellow was at a loss. Some extraordinary event must be taking place in his master's life. All day his behavior had been most peculiar. Contrary to his habits, he had arisen in the early morning and shut himself in his lonely parlor of the Holland House; sat before the fire for hours reading and rereading a package of old letters, stopping occasionally to glance at a number of photographs as old in appearance as the letters. The photographs were all of the same strikingly pretty girl, whose face was full of youth, animation and beauty. The eyes of the master sought from time to time these pictures with the eagerness of a youthful lover. So, at least, was the impression of the valet.

The valet was perplexed. He claimed to know all his master's love affairs, and he had never before seen those photographs nor the original.

On entering his parlor the night before the master had a note. From that moment up to the present everything had remained at a standstill. The rest of his mail lay unopened. Everything which should have been done was left undone. The outside world was forgotten. These circumstances had not passed unobserved by the vigilant valet. He helped his master with his fur coat, passed him his walking stick and hat, then, opening the door, watched him anxiously until the elevator went down, cutting his line of vision.

A whole lifetime can be lived in less time than it took to drive from the Holland House to Central Park East. The man in the cab saw the events of his past flash one by one in front of him, leaving but one standing out prominent and alone. Of course it was a woman. Of course he loved her; and of course he was going to see her. Yes, to see her again after twenty-five years of separation. How ridiculous it was to have ever quarreled! How stupid to have made the Continent his home for the last twenty-five years!

He sprang lightly from the cab, ran up the steps and heard the front door-bell ring. Did it really ring? His heart was beating so loudly that he could not tell. A strange face opened the door, took his card and ushered him into the small reception room.

Would she see him in the same room in which they had parted twenty-five years before? He saw her as distinctly

as on that awful day: the dress, the rose, the dark eyes flashing with anger, the little foot stamping its good-bye.

"Will you step this way, sir?"

He followed, hesitating only once, and that upon the threshold of—yes, the same room. The portières were pulled back and he walked boldly forward. The light was soft and subdued. The atmosphere was filled with the scent of American Beauty roses. He had sent them, as of old.

"It was so nice of you to come."

The sound of these words struck him with amazement. Surely that was not her voice.

A woman stood before him with her hand extended; a tall, slender woman with a pale, oval face crowned by a mass of gray hair accurately parted in the middle.

Their hands were clasped, then un-

clasped. The same expression of astonishment appeared on her face. They both stood motionless during what seemed to them an eternity. Undoubtedly it was she. Undoubtedly it was he. The hair was gray, the features were so visibly altered, the expression so different. Still enough remained to assure them that they were the same creatures who had parted in that room twenty-five years before.

No mention of their past was made on that evening. They sat in the corner of the room where the scent of the roses was strongest and the light most dim. His visit was short. The conversation dragged heavily. The clock struck ten. They rose and bade each other good-bye.

Lovers should grow old together, I suppose.



SWEET PERJURY

By GASTON V. DRAKE

IF you love me,
Sigh to me,
If you do not,
Lie to me.
Let me think it,
True or not,
Mine will be a
Blissful lot.

Foolish am I?
Say not so.
How much sweeter
Not to know—
Sweeter far that
Perjury
Than the sorry
Truth to see!

BY ALLAH GIVEN

By MAUDE LEONARD TOWSON

IT is a terrible thing to have such a genius for sympathy that both sides of a quarrel are confided in one. It is almost as distressing as liking the men on either side of one at dinner equally well, and endeavoring to prevent both from being snatched by the girls on the further sides.

I should have been used to it, of course, because, before they were married at all, Herminie Lansing and Peyton Bowling used to descend on me individually and collectively in their storms of rage, demanding bolstering up in their respective stands and battling over my defenseless head in reckless disregard of any ringing in the ears they might produce in their long suffering buffer. There was no more reason why they should have chosen me as a witness of their quarrels and a sort of soothing plaster for their wounds afterward than half a dozen other people, for I did not have any more wisdom or age than they themselves, but they explained their choice of me as a referee in differently emphatic ways.

"You know me so well," Peyton would inform me, his brow corrugated. "I don't have to explain myself. You have so much sympathy. You understand!"

"You let me talk," Herminie would sputter, her great eyes blazing, her long, nervous hands waving. "Nobody else does. You listen. Peyton won't. He drives me mad! I never knew a man who could be more irritatingly lovely or fascinatingly hateful than he can be!"

And so he could. To me Peyton had always been a small boy whom I

liked, but whom I was not in the least sure I should not take by the ear and shut up in a dark clothes closet before I got through with him. Herminie herself was a different sort of a child. She was a year older than I, but she had the irresponsibility of genius. For Herminie could make the piano talk and sing things that she herself, pagan that she was, perhaps felt but dimly. Witches and angels and imps possessed her fingers when the mood was on her, and what was mere man, to say nothing of Peyton, that he should stand against her?

So they were married. I remember I did not congratulate either one of them at the wedding. You don't congratulate a riddle; you hold your head and try to work it out, and to me their future was the biggest riddle that had ever come my way. It was impossible that they should settle down and repaper the dining room one year and the library the next and join a card club and have the whole family on both sides to dinner on Thanksgiving Day like other folks. You would never expect it any more than you would expect a comet to travel about town in a taxicab, or a roaring lion to attend an afternoon tea clad in a lavender satin Directoire gown. To be sure, there was an undeniable charm about their *ménage* felt by everybody except those mummified in layers of conventional wrappings. It is always a pity when one reaches the degree of propriety where rarebits at two o'clock in the morning, with impromptu musicales following, do not appeal to one as vastly entertaining. There still remain people in the world

to whom the heretical thought of staying up all night and sleeping all day would positively shorten their lives, but luckily the Peyton Bowlings rapidly eliminated these from their acquaintances, to the vast comfort of the rest of us.

But it had to come. Herminie swept in on me one day, a swirl of violets and lace and gray draperies and tragic eyes. It was impossible to be torn with pity for any human being so deliciously satisfying to the eye. The observer of such a one invariably has a secret feeling that the sufferer's agony must be counterbalanced somewhat by the knowledge of her reprehensibly fascinating and enviable effect. Yet Herminie was in the grasp of a great emotion as she talked. Everything about her was of the superlative, and I have always thought that the people blamed for having no lasting emotions perhaps exhaust as much vitality and anguish in their brief and fading spasms of love and hate and sorrow as those who suffer one solitary feeling to gnaw into their vitals and hang on to it and parade it for a lifetime. Anyhow, I always did like variety in all things.

"He drives me mad!" repeated Herminie, echoing her very words of a year ago, when she had vowed the same thing because Peyton insisted on a brown automobile instead of a blue one. Only this was more serious than a question of paint. "There is no harmony between us!" poor Herminie wept. "We are not suited in the least to one another. We are temperamentally different—the constant clash has worn my nerves to threads!"

There is really nothing to say to a person who tempestuously tells you things you have always known were true. You cannot with grace be shocked or surprised or indignant. "It is too bad," I murmured inanely. Herminie flashed at me a disgusted look.

"You knew it all along!" she cried. "You knew it before we even were engaged! Why didn't you stop us? Why—"

"Stop you, Herminie?" I interrupted with reproach, and she had the appreciation to smile.

"Even an express train stops when it hits a boulder as big as a house," she complained immediately. "You might—"

"And I'd no mind to get chipped and cracked and disfigured as does the aforementioned boulder in the path of the train!" I retorted with spirit. "Oh, you'll patch it up, Herminie! Stay to dinner with me and forget all about it."

She was looking down at her ungloved left hand curiously, as though she had never seen it before. I wondered rather idly why it was quite ringless. "I'll stay to dinner," she said at last quietly. "But I can't carry out the rest of your program. You see, my lawyers started suit for divorce against Peyton today!"

Something cold trickled over me for an instant, as I had a second's flashing view of what this meant and the long train of consequences.

"Oh, no!" I cried involuntarily.

Herminie shrugged her shoulders as though definitely throwing off her moment of sad seriousness. "Oh, yes!" she mocked. Then more fiercely: "I shall never go back to Peyton Bowling!"

And she didn't. She won her uncontested suit and was off for Europe before we had caught our breath. After the glitter of her pyrotechnic public appearance in court, her appealing beauty and her hushed recital of wrongs at Peyton's hands and her headlong departure had faded iridescently away, Peyton emerged from the obscurity into which he had gracefully sunk himself at Herminie's first outburst. It was irritating to feel as I did when I came downstairs and saw him wandering about the library waiting for me. He looked so injured, so foolishly abashed, like a whipped child, so demanding sympathy, that my old liking for and instinctive leaning toward him surged back and I had to check it sharply. I might as well have let it go, however, for Peyton talked three hours

that evening, and when Peyton talked the result was always much the same as when Herminie touched the piano.

He looked older and there were sharp lines about his mouth. "What is one to do with a woman like that?" he demanded helplessly. "You know Herminie! She—she isn't cut out precisely for the life domestic! We were so utterly opposites!"

I hoped he also was not going to ask me why I had not stopped them. There are limits!

"You cannot know what a comfort and relief this evening has been to me," Peyton said feelingly when he left. "You are the only human being I can talk to, Carolyn! You know us both so well—you understand!"

I insist it was not disloyal in me to let him come. If Herminie had stayed home instead of racing off as she did, she, too, would have come. I verily believe both of them could formulate their thoughts better for using me as the resisting wall which bounced back their missiles of ideas, perhaps turning them in the process as a new side met their gaze as they caught and threw again. Of course, Peyton never posed as the injured party—he was too broad-minded and manly for that—but he certainly had his side of the story. As an impartial acquaintance of both, I was able to judge from his presentment of the whole tragedy. Yet somehow the tragic side of it never was uppermost. For the life of me I could not, after the first surprise was over, feel that this sundering of two lives was much more serious than the quarrels they had had when still in school. There had always been an element of comic opera about these two from the very first.

Peyton picked up his life and made what he could of it. He occupied a peculiar position for a divorced man, for nobody seemed to blame him. Neither did anyone blame Herminie. These two were so peculiarly a law unto themselves that the eccentricities of each excused the other in the judgment of the community. Peyton often talked of the situation to me, and the more he

talked the more puzzled I became as to whether he was a man with a blasted life, or a cynical individual who would have liked publicly to thank his stars on escaping an unpleasant situation had it been otherwise than impolite and impossible to do so. He was courteous and coldly genial when he discussed Herminie, concerning whom he seemed to have thrown up his hands as being an interesting subject impossible of solution by mortal man. Yet I frequently would find him regarding the framed portrait of her which stood on one of the little tables in the library. The first time I suddenly came upon him thus employed he did not appear embarrassed or annoyed at being discovered. He continued to lounge against the window casing and to hold the portrait. "I never saw another face," he remarked, quite as though he were discussing a chance picture in a gallery, "with that peculiarly perfect curve from the temple to the throat. Do you see?"

Herminie's face looked up at me, lovely, defiant, brilliant. A sort of rage seized me as I looked. I expect if I had stood beside Herminie and gazed at a picture of Peyton I should have felt just the same rage. "Can't you forget her?" I asked fiercely. At the moment his life lay ruined before me.

Peyton turned mildly surprised eyes in my direction. "Why should I?" he inquired calmly, thus wiping out the ruins with one fell blow and turning my sympathy in upon myself.

I don't know how it might have ended, for I liked Peyton and he liked me. The months and years had gradually dimmed memories of his former life, even of Herminie. Her vanishment had been as sudden and complete as that of a shooting star. She was a myth, a remembrance. Then, three years after it all happened, the air became filled with Herminie. First, she had been working like mad at her music, and next, she was creating a sensation in Berlin. As usual, the world was hers for the asking. Peyton seemed totally unmoved by the news. "It is curious," he said to me later, "that I cannot take

a flicker of interest in the subject. It is as though Herminie were someone I might have known a thousand years ago on some other planet!"

Somehow I was glad. It was not that I was sentimental over Peyton, but these long months of comradeship had made him mine in a way, and I knew why his indifference was so complete. A man cannot yearn for one woman when he is busy demanding sympathy and understanding from another. It was at this point that Herminie came back, and to make her re-entry more dramatic, she brought with her a huge blond giant who was her fiancé. He was something important and ornamental about the German Court, and his capture was therefore a triumph. That was why she brought him back. It seemed to me distinctly flaunting and ill bred in her to do so. It was surprising that the return of so old a friend as Herminie should depress me so. I had not seen her in the week she had been in town until she wrote saying that she and Herr von Bremer would call the following Sunday afternoon. It made me nervous, even with all my curiosity to see her and the man with whom she had chosen to begin life all over again. My first frantic rush to the telephone to warn Peyton that his usual Sunday afternoon was preempted was checked, first, by the recollection of his absence from town on business, and next by a curious sort of embarrassment. He was nothing to Herminie nor she to him, yet I felt an odd reluctance in admitting to myself I was on such close terms with my old friend's ex-husband. I forgot all about it, however, in the overpowering presence of Herminie and her fiancé. She was more nervous, more brilliant and audacious than she had been—and more lovely. The thinness of her face had lent her a wistfulness contradicted by the flash of her great eyes. She was as some mental perpetual motion machine, and fifteen minutes of her society made my head whirl. Feebly I wondered if she ever slowed down her rushing pace, then dimly I grew aware she did not dare to! She impressed

me as living at the same tremendous rate at which a person talks when he is talking against time to prevent unpleasant interruptions. Herr von Bremer watched her with a great pride and interest. It was quite easily realized he had never seen anything like her and hence his enchantment. To my horror she mentioned Peyton casually in her conversation, and Von Bremer's florid face clouded as he grumbled dark phrases under his breath in his native tongue.

"Carl," Herminie said lightly, "grows quite frantic at the idea of Peyton. I have never been able to make him view the subject as a mere incident and unnoteworthy."

Von Bremer spoke eagerly. "I know all," he told me. "I his neck could br-r-reak! Her! The angel!"

Herminie laughed ringingly, delightedly. "Isn't he lovely?" she asked rudely, carelessly. "I like him when he is fierce! Roar again, Carl!"

Herminie's hard levity jarred, and to cover my lack of fit words I turned to straighten some magazines and paused, congealed. Up the walk leading to the front porch strode Peyton Bowling, lithe, unknowing, walking into the jaws of destruction, personified by one large German gentleman afire with romantic devotion and possessed of heaven knows what weird notions about the characteristics of his lady love's former husband. At his stage of sentimental insanity, it was easily deduced that he could picture Peyton no less than an iniquitous monster only fit to be utilized as a floor mop or as a pulverized scouring powder. And he had the build and muscle and inclination to resolve the man already ascending the porch steps into either of these highly necessary but undesirable commodities when considered in connection with immaculate frock coats and clean shaven faces. I did not stop to think. With one leap I was beside Herminie and the alarmed Von Bremer, grasping them each by a wrist.

"Come!" I panted.

As a unit we three swept toward the library door, I in the lead, Herminie in

her Parisian finery unresisting, paralyzed by fear, dragged by my left hand, Von Bremer following the lead of my right, bewildered, breathless, trying to adjust his brain to this new American custom. When I started the headlong flight I had no plan but the nebulously instinctive one of running from danger. I wanted to get them away—but there are not many places where you can hide a six-foot blond giant and a tall woman on the spur of the moment. As the maid laid her hand on the knob of the front door the reeling blackness before me cleared.

"Come!" I gasped again, and we plunged headlong toward the door leading into the butler's hall, through the pantry, the kitchen and out onto the back porch. I shoved them off onto the ground almost bodily and clung to the railing, breathing hard.

"Mein Gott!" Von Bremer rumbled in a repressed undertone. "Vot iss it?" His good English had fled in his excitement.

Herminie was cooler, but angrier. "Will you kindly tell me, Carolyn," she began indignantly, holding out a torn flounce as she spoke, "what this extraordinary—"

Then I came to. I did not dare explain because, come what might, Von Bremer should not know he had missed Peyton Bowling by two turns of a front door knob. I wanted no massacre in our library with its new Persian rug. I pressed one hand against my heart and spoke intently. "Don't either of you," I stammered, "dare set foot in this house while I'm gone! I—I'll get your things!"

I fled up the back stairs in staggering haste. On their arrival Herminie had left her wraps in my bedroom, Von Bremer his hat and coat in the downstairs hall. Well, he would have to do without that Berlin overcoat, and instead of a silk hat he could get acquainted with the American bicycle cap as typified by my small brother's. With the cap, Herminie's Persian lamb coat and her Paris toque tightly grasped, I raised a back upstairs

window and looked down on the two below. Herminie was whitely furious, and I could not blame her. It would be trying to an angel's temper to be suddenly hurled out of your best friend's house via the back door and commanded to stand freezing in a winter blast in a chiffon and lace gown.

"Here!" I hissed, dropping the articles I held and straining my ears for sounds of Peyton, who, with his familiarity with the house, was apt to investigate, in heaven knew what direction, his amazing reception and long wait.

"Your specialty seems to be monosyllables!" Herminie snapped at me. "I don't see—"

"Himmel!" snorted Von Bremer, picking the bicycle cap out of the frozen stalks in the geranium bed and holding it in two disdainful fingers. "Vot iss? My silk hat—my coat—"

"You can't have them!" I wailed miserably, hysterically. "Not now! But put on that cap—and, Herminie, go out the alley way, please!"

As she stared at me, aghast at this fresh evidence of my insanity, I caught a full view of Von Bremer. He was six feet one and broad, and got up in the full glory of afternoon attire, and he had a huge blond mustache that curled up fiercely like the Emperor's, and he had just meekly put on his big blond head the bicycle cap of a twelve-year-old boy and was gazing at me with reproach and bewilderment in his eyes as who should say, "Behold what you have done!"

My nerves were at the breaking point. Clinging to the window sill I began to laugh while the tears rolled down my cheeks. I laughed with indrawn gasps that hurt horribly, and even then I saw that beautiful line from Herminie's temple to her throat as she stared up at me, a frozen image of wrath and wonder. In that moment I noticed also what I had not seen before, the look of sadness overlying her face, visible now that she had been startled into pausing in her mental rush. And onto this tableau Peyton Bowling walked through the

kitchen door. Of course, in our mad flight we had left the doors open behind us, and he had naturally pursued the track of least resistance in his tour of the strangely deserted house. He stood on the steps looking down at Herminie, and she stood gazing up at him. Von Bremer and I were as nothing! We were spectators, part of the scenery, two of the orchestra seats, almost anything inanimate and of no account. How long they stood there silently I do not know. It might have been years, and it probably was ten seconds. Then Peyton spoke her name and in that one word was all the heart-break, all the love, all the beaten back inner self of the man he had trampled

on and denied for three years. She said nothing, but she did not need to when he could see her face. As water floods to its level from a height they swept into one another's arms. I had a glimpse of Von Bremer in the ridiculous bicycle cap looking very pale and holding his head very high, stalking around the corner of the house with his splendid soldier gait—and I closed the window and found myself walking very carefully to my room, as though afraid of waking someone if I made a noise. It is no wonder I cried as I did. Somehow I felt very sorry to think I had ever laughed at Herr von Bremer. I—you see, I knew a little what he must be feeling.



WHEN YOU ARE SAD

By ELSA BARKER

WHEN you are sad, beloved, my soul hears
 The far-off sighing and unworded pain
 Of all earth's buried lovers; the cold rain
 Of all their lonely, unremembered tears
 Falls on my heart afresh. Ancestral fears,
 Lurking among the shadows of my brain
 Like ghosts among the living, weave a chain
 Of immemorial omens down the years.

Your joy is of the hour, and pleasures me
 Like sunshine and the spring; your smiles are flowers
 That grow in my life's meadows wild and glad:
 But in your sadness broods eternity,
 Beyond the tides of æons and of hours. . . .
 And so I love you more when you are sad.



"I UNDERSTAND the duke's search was fruitful."
 "Yes, he found a peach."

THE ENCHANTED GARDEN

By G. MARION BURTON

IT was to them the most wonderful Garden in the world, this Dream Garden at the edge of earth, where the wine-red bougainvillæa splashed like crushed heart's blood against the green of ilex trees and palms.

They had planned the Garden together, the man and the woman; that was why it was of such bewildering beauty. Enchantment lay over the Garden, so that it was not seen by other men, but only by these two.

But the man feared greatly that perhaps some day a ruthless and inquisitive hand might find and despoil their secret Paradise, so he said:

"We must build a high wall about our Garden, beloved, so that Public Opinion and his neighbor, Scandal, cannot find their way herein, and we will call our Garden the 'Garden of Forgetfulness,' for are we not here to forget the whole wide world?"

The woman sighed in the fullness of joy and danced gaily but softly through the Garden; softly, quite softly, lest her joy become apparent to Malice, Envy and Uncharitableness, those three wretched sisters who cause so much misery and heartache.

So the wall was built high and fast around three sides of the Garden, and the man and the woman dwelt therein for many a day with murmured words of tenderness and whispered assurances, each to the other, that love like theirs made all things right and holy, purifying what the cold World calls wrong by the very white heat of its intensity.

The fourth side of the Garden, which was unprotected by the wall, sometimes caused vague uneasiness to the

man and the woman, and they had strange forebodings concerning it for which they could not account, seeing that it was sheltered from human eyes by an arm of the great Sea of Life which glistened and dimpled and danced before their enraptured vision in unbelievably beautiful tints of amethyst and chrysoprase. Laterite steps cut their way down to this Bay, and as the days went by the man would often come upon the woman sitting thoughtfully on these steps and gazing questioningly at the water, which finally, to his imaginative mind, assumed at times a strangely sinister aspect. Neither spoke of the weird influence of this Bay, but both felt it was the one shadow between them, and often their glances met furtively.

One day the woman with whitening face pointed silently to the Bay, which in the night had risen almost to the top of the laterite steps. The man bowed his head in the anguish of dumb despair, and putting his arm around the woman covered her eyes with his lips. Each day, however, the Bay crept mercilessly higher and higher. It drowned the fragrance of the riotous roses; it menaced the birds, and their song was dead; the breath of the tomb hung over the Garden. Slowly and more hopelessly each day the man and the woman, with set, tortured faces and entwined arms, were forced to retreat toward the wall they had built against Public Opinion and his neighbor, Scandal. At length, one bitter night, they stood without the wall—asunder.

For the name of the Bay was Conscience, and its embrace was death to the Garden of Enchantment.

"MIRACLE!"

By ADELAIDE STEDMAN

THE little monastery nestled cozily in one of the valleys of the Italian Alps but a mile or two from the vast estate of the Amalfi family, and this winter afternoon it seemed a very haven from the fury of the storm raging blindly along the mountain tops.

Fra Pietro from the small tower gazed long at the whirling snowflakes, narrowing his eyes to gain a far outlook, and suddenly in the dim distance he saw a tiny speck of blue rise, then sink again into the solid whiteness. It was enough. Girding himself with the fur cloak of the ice countries, and seizing snowshoes and staff, courageously he set out, sturdy and footsure, murmuring swift prayers the while, and two long hours later, when the early night had fallen in its blackness, he struggled back, bringing with him a man half frozen, but, thanks to him, alive.

It was quite an ordinary occurrence. The brothers scarcely looked up from their tasks as the two passed down the long corridors. Was this not part of the winter's routine? The stranger was given hot soup and bread in the refectory and respectfully left alone.

In an hour the gray old Abbot appeared in the doorway. "You have quite recovered, my son?" he inquired kindly.

"Quite, father. Fra Pietro undoubtedly saved my life. I started from Amalfi at daybreak during a lull in the storm. I wanted to see some of these wonderful snow scenes—fool that I was!" He pointed ironically to the traveler's pack at his feet. "If no one had come—" He paused meaningly.

"It was by the mercy of God," replied the old monk reverently.

A great log fell apart with a shower of sparks in the ensuing silence; and each tiny red eye had winked innumerable times, then grayed forever before either spoke. Finally the man rose impulsively. "Will you take me to the chapel, father?" he asked. "Let me make some offering at the shrine. Surely that is only proper gratitude."

"Come," the Abbot smiled, well pleased as he led the way to the sanctuary, where, with many little genuflections and muttered prayers, he halted finally before an old painting of the Virgin and Child.

"It is Our Lady of Amalfi—a travelers' shrine," explained the gentle old churchman.

His companion dropped some shining coins into a tiny box near by, then crossed himself humbly as he gazed at the faded masterpiece, the long, pale face with its drooping lips and somber, dark eyes gazing lovingly at the beautiful Child.

"It is a sad face," he commented briefly.

"It is our penance," responded the monk with a sigh.

"Penance! For what?" The man's expression was sharply interested.

"Long ago"—the Abbot's voice took on a droning inflection as he commenced, for to him the legend was an oft told tale, part of his very life—"long ago when Gregory was Abbot here, a war raged between Milan and the rest of Lombardy. The Counts of Amalfi were our nearest neighbors. Gregory was a Lombard, the Amalfi staunch Milanese.

"It was a mysterious Providence that thus reopened old wounds. Many years before Gregory and the Count had had a bitter quarrel, the cause of which they kept locked in their own hearts, but all knew that for a long period they never wiped the black hate from their souls. Then Gregory entered the Church, and scarce had he become Abbot when the cruel war broke out and each man arrayed himself on the side of his overlord.

"One night there was a storm, just such a one as you saw today. The old Count's enemies attacked his castle and he was forced to make his escape out into the snow, where he soon lost himself amid the dazzling drifts. Gregory saw him from the watch tower. He lifted his hands in despair, but he had shed much Lombard blood, and I fear me—well, Gregory was a hard man. He would give no sanctuary. The Count died that night out there in the bitter cold"—the old man's voice sank—"and at daybreak, when he drew his last breath, Our Lady's face changed from smiling loveliness to—" His eyes saddened and he pointed mutely to the little shrine. "Gregory had sinned, he knew it; and from that day to this it has been our first duty to rescue all wanderers lost among the great mountains, but seemingly"—he heaved an unconscious sigh—"the atonement has not been enough; the curse remains. But some day, Our Lord"—he smiled serenely—"some day . . ."

In silence the two returned to the refectory, where the Abbot paused a moment to add: "No Amalfi has lived on the estate this generation, but it makes no difference. There has never been any friendship between the castle and the monastery since that time." Then the stranger was shown to a tiny cell where he was to repose for the night.

There he sat staring at the cracked gray walls until the chant of the monks proclaimed the midnight mass to have ended. Then swiftly, with a box under his arm, he stole softly through the cold rooms, past the brothers keeping vigil in the library, into the deserted chapel. Hastily he pushed the

still burning lights close to the Virgin's face, and opened with a click his canvas case, revealing the glow of paints. Deftly he set to work muttering, "The Saints aid me, if I am doing right!" Slowly under his skillful brush the Mother's lips curved softly upward, the worn cheeks assumed a rounded beauty, the dark brown hair brightened with a tint of gold, and the eyes—surely there grew in them a gleam of brilliant light; and when the painter finally drew away there was the Virgin smiling joyfully down at the Child.

"It is well done," sighed the man. "I have not sinned."

In the pale dawn of the morning the monks reentered the sanctuary. Heads bent, hands muffled in capacious sleeves, they slowly took their places, murmuring brief prayers of devotion.

Suddenly the Abbot stepped close to the little shrine, still fenced about with its cordon of blazing lights. "No, no!" he whispered; then, a look of intense conviction illumining his face, he wheeled about, arms raised, hands outstretched. "Our Lady smiles!" he cried in ecstasy. "See! See! Our sin is atoned! It is a miracle!"

In an instant a surging mass of men crowded about the altar, exclaiming, wondering, uttering inarticulate sounds of joy, faces alight with an exaltation that comes but once in a lifetime, and over all was the constant murmur: "A miracle! A miracle!"

At the sound of the outcry the stranger hurried softly to the chapel door. Devoutly he crossed himself, and when at last the monks went back to prayers, a glory of faith in their eyes, he knelt on the cold, gray stone until the faint tinkle of the bells announced the elevation of the Host. Then he rose and left, just as the newly risen sun touched into a soft radiance the smiling Mother and all the kneeling men.

Hastily he made ready for departure and went out again into the white world, leaving behind him on the Abbot's table a card on which was written a name—Pietro, Count de Amalfi.

LITTLE FABLES OF TRUTH

By CHARLOTTE BALDWIN

ONE MAN AND TWO WOMEN

ONCE upon a time a Man beheld a Woman and saw in her the only possible Mother for his Children. He told her so. She believed him and they were Married. When their first Child was born, the pastor of their church baptized it and announced to them that God in His infinite love and mercy had thus signally and wonderfully set His seal of approval upon their Union. The woman believed what the preacher said—but her husband knew better.

One day the Wife found that the great majority of men have Two Hearts. By this happy arrangement they are able to give one whole heart, unreservedly and faithfully, to their Wives and the Mothers of their Children; the other they give spasmodically and casually to a successive Series of Women whom it would be quite impossible to think of in connection with little children. When the Wife realized this she passed a bitter hour, but she looked searchingly into these Two Hearts of her husband and into the eyes of her children, and she suddenly felt an overwhelming Pity for the women who in turn possessed the Second Heart her husband kept at his disposal.

Now, these other women had their Intuitions also. They knew quite well of the man's love for his Wife, and they knew the exact value of the quality of love he gave them. They spent hours in convincing themselves they were Perfectly Happy and that children bored them to death—a merry, care-free life for them! So each woman tried to be content.

But the Wife sent for her hairdresser and dressmaker, and brought herself to leave the nursery long enough to get herself up to date. She told her husband she thought the children were now old enough to allow of her taking up her Society Life again. She had her Day at Home, gave weekly Dinner Parties, and became quite the rage in her own set, all of which pleased her husband so much that his Extra Heart was quite empty most of the time.

And the Other Women? Well, they had their off days too, when they knew that they longed for something they did not have; then they borrowed the Neighbors' Babies and sent flowers to the children's hospital. As for the Man, his sex making it impossible for him to have anything so illogical as an Intuition, he knew nothing of the feelings in the hearts of his Wife and his Friends; so he patted himself on the back and felt that he was a deuce of a good fellow. He was quite sure he had been parceling out suitable and appropriate happiness to each of the women.

II

THE HEART OF A MAN

ONCE upon a time a Boy loved a Girl and asked her to marry him. They became engaged, and while they were engaged they grew up. When they had been engaged for some years, and were old enough to marry, the Boy, now a Man, found he had outgrown his love for the Girl, now grown to be a

Woman. Since the Woman loved him faithfully and entirely, she saw the change in the Man and knew he had ceased to love her, so she freed him from his engagement.

Now, the cause of the Change in the heart of the Man was this: When he first met the Girl he was a Very Young and Innocent chap, and the beauty and sweetness of the Girl had drawn all that was best in him to her; but as he grew older and came to know men and began to see success smiling in his direction, and met women in the City different and more interesting than his little sweetheart, he suddenly realized that she was not fitted to make a wife for the man he was fast getting to be. She was too goody-good, prejudiced and narrow-minded for a successful City Attorney. She was the perfect ideal for a charming hostess in a quiet Suburban Home, president of the Woman's Town Club, teacher of a Sunday school class and popular and beloved by everyone in her own town, but in New York she would certainly be Miserable. She would be shocked when she found he would wish to have a well stocked Wine Cellar in their home, and grieved when she realized that, to be a successful man, he must play Bridge at his Clubs until 3 A.M. He thought over these and other Growing Interests in his life, and he felt it would be only kind to her to give her up. Being a gentlewoman of Sense and womanly Pride, she made his release astonishingly easy, but as neither of them loved anyone else, they were very Lonely and Heartbroken, and both decided they would Never Marry.

Consequently, in the course of a year, they both married. Their engagements and weddings occurred at about the same time. She married a man of Splendid Character and Strong Personality, who made her Very Happy. Now, the Man found the very woman he was sure was exactly fitted to be his wife: very beautiful, charming, broad-minded, untrammelled by any prejudice, mentally his equal and very Popular in their Set. She loved him as entirely as he could wish,

and he was Mad about her. They were married; children were born to them; he climbed to the very Head of his Profession, and he made a great deal of Money. Everything that he had considered important to his Happiness was his. He thanked God, or whatever Deity he had arranged with to preside over his particular fortunes, that he had escaped the narrow, cramped and tiresome life which would have resulted had he married his boyhood sweetheart.

Now, one day this Man was sitting in his private office, very busy on a Great Case, when a clerk announced his sister. In the course of conversation, she happened to tell him that a son had been born that very morning to the Woman he thanked heaven he had not married. Whereupon, this Happy and Successful Man, a boy no longer, stretched his arms out upon his table, put his head upon his arms and wept like a child. His sister was amazed, but being a woman of some Discernment, she quietly left the room. However, she added another chapter to others laid away in her mind, for the making of a book to be called, "The Heart of a Man."

III

THE GREATEST POSSESSION

ONCE upon a time three Great Men received their Rewards for their Greatness—from that Destiny which had shaped their beginnings æons ago, and had already arranged for their ends in æons to come.

The greatness of these Three Men differed each from the other, and so did the Rewards for their Greatness.

To the First Man, who had been so great a Politician, so wonderful a Statesman, so diplomatic an Organizer and so convincing an Orator that he could make even himself believe anything he wished, Destiny awarded the Greatest Gift in the land, and heaped Fame and Honors on his wise and deserving head.

The Second Man was a double Genius, and had added in wonderful measure to both the Art and Literature of his time and country. Thousands and thousands laughed and wept as he saw fit over his Paintings and his Books; thousands and thousands yet unborn would continue to pay tribute to his greatness. The Reward Destiny gave to this man contented him—enduring and lasting Fame and Appreciation while he was Still Living.

The Third Man was very great because he had spent his life in searching and longing for Truth in every form. It had meant sacrifice, privation, pain, soul torture and physical anguish, but he had never faltered, nor failed in any test that had been given him. He had worked and he had prayed and he had never ceased to search for Truth. The Reward given to this man Destiny very

seldom bestows on Mere Mortals. To him was given the Greatest Thing of all—Truth itself. He received the Gift with Understanding and Strength. He placed it in the center of his Great Heart, where it scorched and burned and wellnigh killed him with that Pain which Truth always brings; but the man stood strong and straight and never flinched and *Felt* to the uttermost and *Believed*. He became Humble and Sincere, and he was possessed by that Love for humanity which made Christ great. And when he had allowed Truth fully to possess his heart, the Pain ceased and Joy and Peace filled his life, and the light in the eyes of this man drew out the Human Qualities in those he met, and men loved him. He was Happy with the Happiness that does not pass. He had earned the Greatest Possession.



THE CALL

By HELEN HAMILTON DUDLEY

IT came like a strain of music,
Slow-stealing, o'er my heart—
Like the song of a bird, half timidly,
That trills in a crowded mart.

It came with a heavenly note of joy
Like the chiming of seraphs' bells—
Yet it pulsed with the deep-toned agony
Of the cursed in a thousand hells.

It held me bound at Life's wide gate
And demanded I pay the toll. . . .
I passed, but the finger of Love had burned
Its name across my soul.



A JUDGE of human nature usually makes a mistake in his estimate of himself.

TO THE DEVIL AND BACK

By H. FRASER HILL

THE "Amen" of the last hymn died slowly away with the irregular flatness of village intonation.

The vicar held up his hands and gave the evening benediction to his flock.

From the west window the dying light fell on the head of a kneeling woman, making a dazzling globe of the coil of hair beneath her somber hat. Slowly the vicar's wife rose from her knees and followed the other worshippers from the narrow nave.

Only the clergyman was left. He took off his surplice and attended to the duties of closing the church, lingering before he left the building as though loath to quit it.

He knelt where his wife had knelt, and the same beams that had lighted on her fell on his hard, ascetic face and were lost in the blackness of his dark hair. His lips moved in a prayer.

"God, suffer me not to love her too much to the detriment of Thy service. Let not her beauty fill my heart lest I lose my soul and be damned everlastingly."

Every Sunday for four years he had thus prayed since the day he had brought the girl back to his house from her convent school. He believed firmly in Hell fire and everlasting punishment, and the church was always filled. He taught no easy way to salvation, and the villagers flocked to church for very fear of the terrible end of sinners which he kept always before their eyes. His was the doctrine of burning fires and unending torments that knew no abating for evildoers. Young and old were horribly afraid

and trembled, being ignorant of the easy doctrines of the new century.

"You must do your best, my wife," said the vicar, "for these things come as duties more than pleasures, and we cannot well refuse the Squire's dinner invitation, which I know is meant to show honor to my calling."

They walked together up the park to the great house and rang the door bell. She left her long black cloak in the hall and smoothed her hair with her hands before entering the crowded dining room.

It would have been useless for the exquisitely dressed and high born women there to ignore her on account of her simple gown and obscure social position. One and all, the men turned round and gazed in wonder as she came into the room. She was taller than any other woman there. A young giantess, slim and straight as a fir tree, yet full with the roundness of her girlhood. Her skin was faultless, what of it showed, for the vicar would not suffer her to wear a low-necked gown. In her high white frock she looked austere, beautiful, and gave but a hint of hidden beauties.

All the women present realized and trembled at the thought of this radiant young thing, guiltless of a single artificial help to her beauty, trembled for their own enameled faces and artificial coiffures and other fashionable contrivances in the face of nature, which is rarely perfect, but when it is, is unapproachable.

And one man there, to whom nothing was denied because he had great pos-

sessions, straightway demanded of the hostess that he should take the vicar's young wife in to dinner.

And she let him have his way. And that man swore in his heart that, though he was weary of life before to-night and had traveled much and seen and loved many women in the past and had ceased to desire anything more, now was a new life given to his dead heart. And though he possessed the greatest estate and the best things in this pleasant land, he knew that all these were as nothing unless he could possess with them this tall girl, with the big, unfathomable eyes and the copper-colored hair.

The vicar said to his wife, as they walked down the park together and the moonlight fluttered through a network of boughs above them: "I am glad they are seldom here, for it takes us out of our usual life, and the gap is too wide to be bridged in one evening. It wearies me, my wife, and makes me dread that my words may never reach them."

But into the eyes of the girl at his side had come a great and luminous light.

Down in the Bracken Close, where the thick covert is never disturbed through the long summer days save by the scurrying feet of the native things of the wood, a man waited.

He looked frequently at his watch and gazed eagerly toward the opening beyond. Eagerly and impatiently he waited, for his eyes hungered to rest again on a woman's face that he might gaze his full. Now and then, as a frightened rabbit ran through the bracken, he started in glad expectancy. She came at last, gliding swiftly through the tall fern leaves, nervous, but graceful as a doe, and with anxious eyes. He went quickly to meet her and held both her hands.

"At last!"

"But I must go again," she said low and quickly. "One is sure to be seen, even here. The whole village watches everything. There is no hiding from them anywhere—anywhere."

He did not answer. He was feasting his eyes hungrily on her face, marking well in his memory every fair line and contour of her comeliness to serve him when she was not with him.

"I must go," she said again.

His arm stole around her. "You cannot go," he said. "It is impossible."

"But I must," she urged, looking round with frightened eyes and seeking to release herself.

"Now tell me," he said very gravely, "what is to happen? You cannot go till we have made some plan."

"What is there to be done?" she asked, but seeing the look in his face and his desire and love for her, she could say no more. He poured words into her ears that she had never heard before, and there stole upon her being the recklessness that comes of the heart's desire. She was born again and lived in a new world.

There is love which comes swiftly on the wings of a passing moment, in a glance, in the dying away of the sound of a voice. It was so with her, and all the precepts and morals of a convent life and the yet harder discipline of the four years of her marriage faded away in the awakening of her woman's pulse to life.

But custom dies hard, and in the midst of his persuading the single bell of the church tolled its monotonous call to evening prayer. It was the five o'clock service.

"And they that have done evil shall go into everlasting punishment, but they—but—they—"

Into her throbbing brain, reeling with the first awakening of passion, the bell monotoned its warning. She broke from the arms that were about her and fled swiftly through the bracken.

Again another day the man waited, and again she came, but with the foretaste of experience and with glad eyes.

She had learned the craving of heart hunger, which knows no appeasing. She had struggled—in vain. The maxims of all the Saints fell short of the power of one man's voice, who was no

saint. And as for the terrors of everlasting punishment, what weighed the tortures of eternity against this stolen half-hour's ecstasy?

"I have planned everything," he said. "I shall go to London tonight, and you must be brave and come tomorrow as I have arranged for you. You cannot make a mistake; I have written it all down. Don't bother about luggage or anything; it will only hamper you, and you shall have everything—everything ready for you. Just walk up to the station—here is your ticket—dated for tomorrow."

"I have never been to London in my life," she said nervously.

"That is nothing," he answered. "I shall be at the station when the train arrives. I shall be at the carriage door when you get out. You will be safe—absolutely safe, and I shall drive you quickly to our home. You shall go anywhere then and do anything that pleases you," he said.

She opened her big eyes and looked up at him in wonder.

"I have never been to a theater. Do you think I might go to one?" she asked.

He smiled tenderly at her. He laughed for joy of her.

"Sweet, shall you not go, indeed and indeed and indeed!"

The bell tolled for evensong unheeded. The terrors of everlasting punishment had lost their power. And from the place at the reading desk the vicar looked in vain for his wife's bronze hair on which the evening sun was wont to lighten.

The next day the vicar said to his wife: "Child, you are looking pale, and yesterday I missed you from evensong. Why were you not there?"

"I was tired," she answered, averting her eyes from his penetrating gaze. "I cannot always go to the services."

"Naturally not," he said gently, "and forgive me for mentioning it. I only feared you were out of health. Next week you must go to the seaside, and perhaps the bracing air will revive you. Let us arrange for it to be so."

Next week! She started; for the future was too big with vague change for her to grasp a definite thing within it.

"Let us go to Weston," he continued. "I will take my holiday then."

She bowed her head in acquiescence, for no words came to her dry lips.

"Tomorrow I sleep at Garside, where I preach, and as it will be lonely for you here, let me tell my sister to come to be with you."

But she answered quickly: "No, no; I am never lonely, and besides, I will do some shopping at Leyton. I will take the opportunity to buy several things with the money you gave me on Monday."

He smiled a stern approval, and perhaps for the first time was glad that he had not given the ten pound note to charity. Once more the evensong bell sounded and she went in with him and knelt in her usual place. Into her throbbing brain the sound burned and sobbed. "And they that have done good—done—good—done—good."

The five o'clock train steamed punctually into the London terminus, and his anxious gaze quickly discovered her. Before she had time to look around or wonder he was at her side and held her hand in his. No words were wasted, and soon she was being driven quickly along at his side. The spirit of change and adventure was dominant in her now, and she laughed for gladness.

"I should have been lost if you had not been here. Oh, I was so glad to see your face in that great crowd!" For answer he kissed her.

Then the carriage stopped and he took her arm and led her up the steps of his house, and the door closed upon them. It was very beautiful within these doors. The hall was a soft mingling of subdued tones, and the carpet like the moss in the Bracken Close. They passed along into another room and he gave her tea. The room was rose-colored, and her eyes swam with joy and delight at its beauty. She saw it only dimly, not realizing the priceless

treasures that were about her, but only the vague loveliness of everything.

"Mine—absolutely mine!" he whispered. And she had no answer for this proprietorship which was not irksome to her.

"Now you shall see your own room," he said, "and dress for dinner. Your maid has chosen what she thinks will please you for tonight, but nothing could be good enough for you, sweet."

Her room was blue—the blue of the pale blue Delphinium flower—carpet and curtains and bed hangings and walls, and the coloring and beauty and softness dazzled her senses.

On the bed lay things to delight a woman's heart. Lingerie of lace and chiffon, and garments of billowy, filmy fineness. On her dressing table were gold-gemmed toilet sets and costly scent and powders and fans and gloves and gossamer-like handkerchiefs and ornaments set with huge diamonds that almost blinded her unaccustomed eyes with their glinting.

Throwing off her hat with a little cry, she let down the great coil that lay close to her head and fell to brushing it with a jeweled brush with the joy of a child. And as the great, shining mass of her hair fell around her and covered her whole form he ran toward her.

But the voice of the maid was heard impenetrably severe: "Is madam ready for me?" Instead he turned and left her. And this fair girl, who had spent the simplest and most frugal of lives, albeit rigidly refined, found in the ease and beauty around her a new delight. When she was dressed and the long glass showed up her own picture, she was astonished at what she saw therein.

For an accomplished maid can do great things, and with such materials as were at her disposal the result was superb. The white dress, a dream some master of the art had created in his fancy for that woman alone whose height could touch wellnigh six feet, with a figure round as Juno and withal as slim as a child, fell around her feet.

"Madam is perfect. And madam is satisfied?"

The maid had done her best with the unlimited experience she had had in such matters.

She went down the staircase to the rose-colored room where he awaited her. He was speechless with love and admiration when he saw her. They dined in a gorgeous room at a small table, decorated with priceless mauve and yellow orchids and candles softly softened by blended shades of mauve. He gazed at her with great wonder. She was so fair to look upon sitting at his table in that sweet intimacy, and he drank anew the knowledge of her love, her beauty and her power. She touched no wine.

"Drink to me, sweet," he said when they were alone, and with trembling hands she raised the glass to her lips and put it down untasted, while the wine spilt on her shivering fingers.

At the theater all was new to her. It was the first play she had ever seen.

The woman who was playing the leading part looked up to the box and recognized the face of the man there, and mad with the remembrance of a past with him, which she knew was gone forever, she outreached her fame, and the house clapped and cheered its praises as never before. The girl in the box looked and laughed for joy at the sound of life which was reaching her.

He took her to supper to a place full of light and gaiety and music, for it filled him with pleasure to see her joy in this new existence. All eyes were turned on her and followed her as she moved, for the joy of living is seldom seen in eyes as in hers that night; she was tasting for the first time of the cup that the rest had drunk to the dregs. To this day men ask who it was that came there and passed from amongst them, and wonder if their dull gaze will be gladdened by her radiant eyes again.

When they reached home a telegram was handed to him, and he read it with an impatient exclamation and crumpled it up.

"Dearest, I have to leave you for a short time. Nothing on earth but this

could take me away for a second now—and, by God, I doubt if it can!"

He smoothed it out and read it again and cursed under his breath. "Yes—I must go. It was a sacred promise that I would go if I were called upon to do so."

He took her upstairs as far as her room and kissed her and turned back and kissed her again and yet again. The longing of his whole life was in those kisses.

"A quarter of an hour—half an hour at the most," he cried, and ran downstairs. She heard the carriage go quickly away.

The maid took off her mistress's gown and brushed out her hair. "What is that?" she asked as her eyes fell on what seemed like a mass of gossamer and lace and floating ribbons in the maid's hands.

"It is madam's nightgown," answered the woman, proud of her careful choice. Close by a clock chimed the hour and struck.

"Where did you put my own clothes?" she asked very calmly.

"They are in the wardrobe there. I did not know how long madam would stay," stammered the woman.

"You can go now," she said. "Leave me."

"And there is nothing more madam requires?"

"Nothing. Leave everything exactly as it is and go," she exclaimed impatiently, for the maid was collecting together the scattered garments she had taken off.

She was alone.

Quickly she pulled her own neat but unlovely garments from the shelf in the wardrobe, and with trembling and agonized hands tore the filmy night-dress from her body. She twisted the long plait of hair into a big coil at the

back of her head and dressed herself with fevered hands—her shoes, her black cloth skirt, her bodice, her jacket, her gloves. She stood as she had stood when she left home that morning.

She gave one swift, all searching gaze round the room, at the tumbled mass of lace and chiffon called a nightgown—the frilled sheets and pillowcases, soft as down and white as chastity, at her own face, as white in the glass, and throwing back to her gaze eyes big out of all reason and staring as the eyes of the dead.

The scent of the perfumes and the flowers on the table reached her senses, and the echo of a voice that would be in her ears when she came to die. The church clock near by chimed the quarter.

She turned and fled down the stairs and out into the street. A cab passed her and stopped. She sprang in and fell cowering and motionless on the seat and went on into the darkness.

And as she was driven away the brougham came back swiftly up the street and stopped, and the man went in at the door by which she had left.

The vicar was ending his sermon and the people hung breathless on his words, for so terrible had been the picture he had drawn to them of the sinner's doom that men and women were shaking for very fear.

"And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire."

They walked out with trembling limbs and terrified eyes.

And the vicar's wife knelt on in her accustomed place, and the evening sun fell on her bronze hair. But from her eyes the light had passed and all joy had gone from her face forever.



FIRST AUTOMOBILIST—Good heavens, Parker! Where did you learn to swear so?

SECOND AUTOMOBILIST—Oh, we used to keep a parrot.

A TEMPORARY AFFECTION

By LOUISE ELIZABETH DUTTON

"YOUNG woman, you'll have to take a long vacation."

Miss Sherman listened to the doctor with philosophic calm. It was her policy to be calm, even when, as in the present case, she was angry. Miss Sherman did not like vacations.

"Very well," she said, "I will go to a quiet place. I will finish my treatise on 'Comparative Anthropology'!"

The doctor put a fatherly hand on Miss Sherman's arm.

"Don't go to a quiet place," he said. "Sail, swim, dance, flirt." Under Miss Sherman's spectacled, expressionless gaze he paused with a faint feeling that his advice was ill-judged. "Dance," he finished vaguely.

Miss Sherman fingered her glasses, and furnished the doctor with fresh inspiration.

"Get those things off," he said. "It's only for reading that you need them, and you're not to do any reading for the next three months."

"But I've worn them five years," said Miss Sherman.

"Then it's time you gave them a rest," said the doctor. "Your eyes will show the strain at first by a slight involuntary motion in the lid of the weaker eye, the left one. The affection will be intermittent, infrequent and, I would say, temporary. Consult your oculist, of course, but do as I say."

"The treatise—" began Miss Sherman.

"Young woman," said the doctor, "do you want to have nervous prostration?"

"'Comparative Anthropology'!" he snorted at Miss Sherman's trim, retreat-

ing back; "that girl's not a day over twenty-eight."

Miss Sherman was not often referred to as a girl. She was dean of a woman's college, the youngest dean in America. Her youth was generally lost sight of in the fact that she was a dean, or concealed by her impersonal manner, which diverted the confidences and violets of the girls under her charge to older, less beautiful, but more sympathetically inclined members of the faculty. Miss Sherman was probably the only woman at Huntley who moved no young heart to tears in the general good-byes at the end of the year. Undisturbed by the lack of emotional excitement, she finished her unhurried packing, and, early in June, stepped on board the Bar Harbor Express, cool, carefully tailored and, in tardy but literal obedience to the doctor's orders, without her glasses.

"Pullman check, please," said the porter, barring her way.

"I have no check," said Miss Sherman, who regarded railroad employees as natural enemies of the human race, and treated them accordingly. "I do not buy seats in advance. What seat can you let me have?"

"Pullman chairs all sold," explained the porter, without interest. "Day coach five cars to the rear."

At this point he stopped short in natural surprise. The station was hot, crowded and glaring. The light would have been a strain on normal eyes. Her level, intense gaze did not waver, but the corner of her left eyelid twitched faintly, revealing a knowing flash of brown. Miss Sherman had winked.

A slow grin spread over the porter's countenance. His eyes widened with delighted understanding.

"All right, lady," he cried. "Oh, all right. I'll fix it up some way. You just step in here, and you give me that." He reached for Miss Sherman's neat dressing bag. "It's too heavy for you to carry."

Without comprehending the situation, Miss Sherman followed the obsequious porter into the car, accepted the chair he procured, and let him lower shades, bring cushions and open windows unregarded. She felt tired, bored and rather frightened. She had left her notes on Comparative Anthropology locked in her study desk, because she knew their power to tempt her into disobeying the doctor; and she missed the closely written, accurately indexed pages, and felt gloomily distrustful of the Maine coast colony she had chosen at random from a stray circular.

"Malden by the sea," it had read. "Best of facilities for boating, bathing and deep sea fishing; wooded walks and drives into the interior. Weekly hops at the Casino a feature of the social life."

If she must go somewhere, what did it matter where she went?

"What does it matter?" she asked herself that evening, arrived at Malden and sitting in the dining room of the little hotel. Supper instead of dinner was barbarous, of course, but she meant to prolong this supper as much as possible, because she did not know what to do next. It was a good supper. Miss Sherman had forgotten the existence of Johnny cake and fresh flounders. A pleasant smell of coffee filled the low-ceiled room. The room would have been charming in its well kept bareness, except for the curiously trying light made by the blending of the candle rays with the glare of the sunset that was reflected from the water through the uncurtained windows.

Miss Sherman glanced indifferently out at the water and back into the room at the people there. They were all talking, nearly all laughing and

nearly all young; girls in delicate dresses, and boys for them to make eyes at. Across the room Miss Sherman saw a boy with blue eyes and a deep sea tan. She looked for a minute at the contrast between his eyes and his brown cheeks, classed him as older than the rest, a man, not a boy, and caught up her bread and began to crumble it, fixing her eyes upon it in embarrassed attention. For, with a puzzled, pleased expression, the man had smiled and bowed to Miss Sherman. And the hot twitching of her eyelid failed to convey to her unsuspecting mind the fact that the man had smiled because he had seen Miss Sherman draw down the corner of her left eye.

Leaving the room, she caught sight of her face in a mirror. The cheeks were tinted with faint pink; the mouth was smiling; the eyes, freed from the glasses, showed brown and sweet. But the charm of the effect was forgotten by Miss Sherman in the painful fact that, as she looked, the left eye of the reflection winked at her.

A faint, polite ghost of a wink it was. The man across the room did not call it a wink at all. He had seen a glint of brown under a fluttering lid, a quaint, mocking light, that died away from the classic beauty of Miss Sherman's features with a promptness that left him piqued and charmed.

But Miss Sherman did not know this. She knew that she had winked, that the conduct of the stranger and the porter was explained and any future misfortune with it, and that she, Helena Sherman, had disgraced herself.

She gathered up her crisp skirts, fled in terror to the furthest corner of the piazza, pushed a chair into the shelter of the vines and crouched there, breathless. She had no intention of hiding in her room. She was safe here. She was comfortable too. The vine blew against her cheek; she smelt flowers she did not know, and heard music that was equally unfamiliar to ears long attuned to the Boston Symphony Orchestra's conscientious rendering of newly discovered masterpieces for the

first and last time on any stage. In the hotel parlor one piano and one violin, their machine-like action softened by distance, were playing a light, steady, throbbing waltz.

"They've got the 'Merry Widow' music even down here," said a man's voice close to her. "I have seen that show sixteen times. I am not ashamed of it, but I pretend to be."

Miss Sherman turned to meet the eyes of the gentleman with the deep sea tan.

"It is Miss Andrews, isn't it?" he said.

Miss Sherman shook her head in speechless wrath. The man sat down on the railing in front of her.

"Then if you aren't Miss Andrews," he said, "suppose you tell me who you are."

Miss Sherman wondered what one said to a rude man like this. With a range of thought whose novelty did not strike her at the time, she reflected that, under any circumstances, she did not know what to say to a man.

"You'd better tell me your name," he said. "It will save time. Because I am going to find out anyway."

With a sudden inspiration Miss Sherman realized that revealing her identity would put an end to this interview and the acquaintance. She realized, also, that it is very easy to put an end to things.

"My name," she said, "is Sherman—Helena Sherman."

"Helena," said the man. "That's a pretty name."

"You may have heard my name before," suggested Miss Sherman. "I am the dean—the dean of Huntley."

"You're what?" said the man blankly.

"I am the dean of Huntley University," she began impressively; "and you"—she stopped aghast, astounded, as the man's laugh rang out suddenly.

"My name is Devereux," he said—"Joseph Devereux. I beg your pardon, but for half a minute I believed what you said. I haven't met a girl down here who doesn't speak the truth, the whole truth, and so forth,

even when she's dancing. I'm glad you've come. The dean wouldn't like you to take her name in vain, though. The dean is an exacting person."

"How do you know?" demanded Miss Sherman.

"I've got a little cousin up at Huntley," said the man. "The girls up there are afraid of your friend the dean."

"And you're not afraid of me?" said Miss Sherman curiously.

The man looked at her. His eyes were steady and very deep. They were like Jane Devereux's, only Jane's were not so blue. Jane was Miss Sherman's prettiest senior.

"Is Jane your cousin?" said Miss Sherman, "Jane Devereux?"

"That settles it," said the man. "I wondered why you were coming over with me now to the dance in the Casino, why you were going to meet my mother there, and why we were going to give you the very best time we can, as long as you are kind enough to stay in this haunt of bridge and the barn dance. Now I know why; we've got to be nice to you because you're Jane's friend."

"I don't dance," said Miss Sherman promptly. Again her companion greeted her statement with a laugh that was almost a shout of amusement.

"The Casino's just over there," said the man.

The waltz sounded faintly in her ears. The man held the vines aside for her to pass, and led the way into the dark of the wood path. And Miss Sherman rose and followed him. It was not until a long time later that she realized the part her affliction had played in her annexation.

She would let circumstances reduce this masterful youth to humble apology by showing him more forcefully than any words of hers could do the absurdity of his willful mistake. Perhaps his mother would see how little Miss Sherman resembled Jane Devereux's friends. Perhaps the lines of Miss Sherman's face and the dignity of her manner would bring the man himself to a slow, ashamed belief that she was the dean of Huntley.

In the meantime Mrs. Devereux was gracious and motherly, the Casino floor was good, Joe Devereux danced as only tall men can dance, and, though this was her first effort since her eighteenth year, Miss Sherman could dance too.

She found herself, at the close of the evening, with all her dances promised for the next week, with a moonlight sail and a game of tennis in the near future, still known to a new and appreciative world as Jane Devereux's friend.

In the course of the next few weeks it was to Jane Devereux that she began to look for escape from the growing awkwardness of her situation. A word or two in one of Jane's letters would reveal Miss Sherman's identity, and save her the explanations that were every day becoming more impossible. Jane's expected visit to her aunt would force Miss Sherman to leave the place. She ought to go away. There was no reason why she should not go away, but with every hour full of unknown, belated pleasures, she became more conscious that she did not want to go away.

She was glad nobody thought her old. She was glad the girls were jealous of her. She was glad when Jane Devereux's sudden trip to Egypt put off discovery indefinitely. She began to enjoy her experiences, soothing her conscience with the thought that they were not her fault. She refused to blame herself because people deceived themselves about her. If the boys chose to crowd round her, filling her dance card and begging her to split her dances, she could not prevent them. If tall lads beguiled her into dark piazzas, and limited their conversation to a discussion of their business prospects, it was not her duty to find safer subjects of discourse. Besides, she liked piazza corners, just as she liked long walks through the woods with a broad-shouldered boy breaking the branches out of her path, and motor drives inland on windy days, with the pleasant consciousness of a boy in a boat waiting for her to keep a tentative engagement.

It was too late to explain. She had tried, at first.

"Billy," she had said warningly to the boy who was walking beside her on the shore path, "I am very much older than you." A stray sunbeam flashed into her eye, her eyelid twitched, and Billy exploded with joy at her subtle jest, and tried to give her his fraternity pin.

After all, she was not, in actual years, so very much older than Billy and his like. And there was always Joe to comfort her with the knowledge that, though he was not the fatherly protector he believed himself, he was, at least, as old as she.

She did not often talk to him seriously. There was a gay freemasonry between them. But in a few curtly put political views she heard him give another man, in his exact answers to her questions about his boat, in the firm, light pressure of his hand over hers on the tiller, she read his infinite, careless knowledge of things she did not know, and guessed he was not entirely ignorant of the things she did know.

One day he found her alone on a little knoll, breaking her promise to the doctor, and straining her eyes over a volume of Browning. He took the book out of her hand and read it to her, filling her ears with the music of the verse, and making her forget to speculate about the meaning of the lines and sit quietly beside him, looking out to sea.

They were on the same knoll one day in late summer. Miss Sherman's hair was damp from swimming; Joe Devereux's coat was tied round her shoulders, and Joe was stretched full length on the pine needles beside her. He looked up at her after a silence, and put out a hand toward her flying hair.

"I like it that way," he announced.

"How?" said Miss Sherman absently.

"That way," he said; "loose and soft."

"It's not neat," said Miss Sherman.

"I never saw it look so well," said Joe.

"Joe," said Miss Sherman, "are you

trying to tell me that you don't like the way I arrange my hair?"

The coat had loosened on Miss Sherman's shoulders. Joe leaned over her and pulled it tight.

"Don't you know what I'm trying to tell you?" he said.

Jane Devereux would have been warned by his voice. Miss Sherman's youngest freshman would have run away, or pretended to run away. But Miss Sherman, who lacked the enlightening experiences of her youngest freshman, sat still and said pleasantly:

"No, I don't know. Why don't you tell me?"

And Joe, with his hands on her shoulders, bent close and kissed her.

Miss Sherman sprang up, hot with blind rage that needed polished and forceful English to express it. She said:

"I will never forgive you!"

The sun was hot on the beach, and the glare from the water was strong, and, confronting Joe, and looking into his hurt blue eyes, Miss Sherman winked.

"Helena!" cried Joe ardently, and, without trying to pursue her, stood watching her vanish.

For the sun was hot, and the glare from the water was strong, and her previous athletic achievements were confined to her remote past, but the dean of Huntley ran very well.

You cannot, however, always escape a situation by running away from it. Lying safe on her own bed, Miss Sherman wished that she had stayed on the beach long enough to leave Joe utterly crushed. She did not like feeling excited when she wanted to think. She did not like her face to be hot and flushed. She had not the least desire to cry for two hours about nothing, and when she finally arose, with supper a thing of the past, to dress for an engagement she was ashamed not to keep, she discovered that powder puff, chamois and toilet water have no effect on a nose that is red with weeping.

She dreaded seeing even the boy she was to meet, but when she reached the piazza she wished for him eagerly.

For the man who took her wrap and guided her in silence toward the wood path was not the harmless Billy; it was Joe.

"Have you forgiven me?" said Joe.

"No," said Miss Sherman.

"I am sorry," he said, "because I mean to do it again."

The warning in his voice was apparent even to Miss Sherman's inexperience, an inexperience that she felt very much aware of tonight. Did all men make love like this one, she wondered, with everything implied, and nothing said? How little she knew about it! How little she knew about anything real or human! How unfit she was to be walking beside Joe, taking the place of some girl who had not sold her birth-right in acquiring unimportant information—some girl who was really young!

She turned to Joe with a quick longing to make sure of her own before she gave it up.

"Say you love me," she ordered.

Joe reached for her hands.

"I'm thirty years old," said Miss Sherman hastily.

"You were twenty-nine last May," said Joe.

"What do you mean?" she said.

"Do you think Jane never writes to me?" said Joe. "Do you think she has no pictures of you? For two months I've known who you are."

"My eyes," said Miss Sherman in a small voice. "It's merely a temporary affection."

Joe laughed.

"I'm dean," said Miss Sherman, "I'm dean of Huntley."

"That is merely a temporary affection," said Joe.

"I must tell you something," she whispered a little later, "something very bad. I wanted to, last time on the beach, I wanted to do it."

"To do what?" said Joe.

"I couldn't help doing it, and I was glad. After I'd said I didn't like you to kiss me, I wanted to."

"Wanted to what?" said Joe.

"I wanted to wink at you," said the youngest dean.

AS THEY WOULD HAVE TOLD IT

By LOUIS BAURY

AFTER MRS. EDITH WHARTON

ALL her life Eve had lived in the sequestered solitudes of Eden's pastoral boundaries. She had never known any other man than Adam—indeed, there was none other then extant—and it was natural that her warm, girlish heart should go out to him as the ideal of all that was good and beautiful, and that she should strive to please him in so far as it lay in her youthful power.

But that harsh, unkind fate which governs the destinies of all mere humans, tossing them hither and thither at its capricious will, decreed it that she should err through her propensity to be overzealous.

For one day, as she was trying to conjure up in her untutored mind some novel and untried means of pleasing him, the idol of her dreams, she be-thought her of that tree whereon grew the large, luxuriant, red, rosy apples. . .

Quietly she rose from her place, treading lightly on the untrimmed grass blades which sparkled beneath her feet, and with fear and trembling, yet borne up by that inherent, native persistency which is the keynote of woman, approached the tree . . .

It was evening. The judgment which she knew must inevitably come had arrived; and, while the heavens boomed and reverberated with the clamor of the approaching storm, she, arm in arm with Adam, walked out, out into the blackness of the unknown night . . .

AFTER RUDYARD KIPLING

My friend Adam told me this story, while I provided the beer.

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"Women are hell," said he, draining down a generous portion of the liquid. "It was a woman that ruined me. I once had a country place of my own; a nice little place with flowers and trees and running brooks and all that. I was happy there, and then a woman came." Here I handed out more beer.

"I took that woman in and treated her well. I fed her and took care of her—which was right in those days. I gave her the best in the land, and in return, sir, she ruined me. Fed me an apple, sir, which has stuck in my throat ever since and choked me; caused me to break the only law there was; drove me out of my home and ruined me."

He paused a moment and I was silent.

"That, sir, is the reward of a woman. Women are hell," he added again.

And, to tell the truth, I more than half agree with him.

AFTER ELINOR GLYN

SHE parted the bushes and stepped out gracefully, fawnlike in her movements. She was clad simply in a wreath of tuberoses, and her hair hung loosely about her shoulders in lustrous, blue-black clusters. Beautiful, beautiful hair!

In her hand was an apple, which she held daintily between her long, dexterous fingers. Heavenly fingers!

And then, across the undulating stretch of emerald sward, she saw him!

"Adam!" she cried. "My Adam!"

He heard, and like a tiger returning to his mate, bounded toward her.

"For you," she breathed, with one of her wonderful smiles, as she held up the apple.

Passionately he clasped her in his

arms. The sinking sun kissed the far off mountain peaks in a blaze of celestial glory, and they sat there together eating—first he and then she taking a bite. . . . The nesting birds twittered, and they were very happy!

AFTER GEORGE ADE

THE Original Peacherine was a Cute Kid named Eve. Eve was the Goods, all right, and Wise—Wise? Say, straight goods, Lillian Russell didn't have a Thing on her—and that's Going Some!

One day, when Eve was Rambling through the Sunny Pastures, and Casting about her Little Peepers for some New Fangled, Mirth Provoking kind of Time Killer, she happened to Get Next to a Tree that shot forth Something besides Lemons.

"Us for this!" chirps the Cute Kid to her Side Pal, Adam.

So the original Peacherine shinnies up the Tree and Passes down a couple of the juicy Fruits to Adam, who was doing an Imitation of Romeo in the Balcony Scene underneath.

But the Cute Kid had the Wrong Hunch that Time. The Blue Laws were on that Day, and it was Nix for the Juicy Fruits.

So she had to Pack Up her Figleaf Umbrella and Taking Adam under her wing, Beat it to another Happy Home.

MORAL: You can search me—ask Sweeney.

AFTER CONAN DOYLE

My friend Sherlock Holmes had been idle for a week, and the strain was beginning to tell on him. For the last three days he had done nothing but smoke his pipe and inject cocaine into his arm with my bicycle pump, and I was worried. But tonight his eyes held the old gleam of interest as he tossed a telegram into my lap.

"I received this today, Watson," he said carelessly, "and I think it promises a very pretty tangle." A knock at the door interrupted him.

"Ah, if I mistake not, here is our client now. Come in," he added.

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In answer to Holmes's summons, a tall, stately girl, with agitated mien, entered.

"My dear madam," remarked he, without turning around, "I perceive that you left home in considerable hurry."

The woman started perceptibly.

"How do you know?" she asked.

"You have nothing on," replied he, with his customary delicacy.

"But how could you know? Your back was turned!"

"Precisely. I saw it in the mirror." All of Holmes's deductions were so simple when explained. "But about your story, madam. You may speak with perfect freedom before my friend, Dr. Watson. He is perfectly harmless and will do nothing but make copy of you."

"My name," she said proudly, "is Eve. I have been wronged, Mr. Holmes; horribly wronged. All the world says that it was I who gave that fatal apple to Adam, and it is not so, Mr. Holmes. I have come to you to see if you can help to establish my innocence."

"I will try, madam," replied Sherlock Holmes. "I have heard the usually accepted version of your story, and I will do my best."

For three days Holmes neither slept nor ate, and I saw but little of him. When he entered the Baker Street apartment on the fourth day, however, I knew something had happened.

"Well?" I inquired.

"It is done, Watson," he cried, sinking into a chair. "The case is solved."

"My dear Holmes," said I, "how did you do it?"

"It was very simple," replied he. "I went down to Eden and worked the whole ground over carefully with a microscope and a pair of tweezers. Near the large apple tree in the center of the garden I found, what Lynx, of Eden Yard, who started on the case, failed to discover—a long, thin track, resembling the imprint of an automobile tire. But remember, Watson, automobiles had not yet been invented." How often I was impressed with his wonderful store of knowledge! "At this date the track could have been made by only one thing—a snake.

"There I had a start. I cast about for further evidence of a snake, and, sure enough, clinging to the trunk of a tree I found three rattles. Adam and Eve had no children, and children and snakes are the only creatures who use rattles. Thus the snake theory was established beyond doubt.

"I had only to find a snake with three rattles missing. But for a while that blocked me. The nearest I could come to what I wanted was one with four missing. That left one rattle still to be accounted for. Then I thought of Adam.

"You know, Watson, I am something of a boxer. I struck Adam several sharp blows in the jaw, until his teeth rattled. Then the fourth rattle was accounted for. Adam ate the apple and had the fourth rattle; the other three rattles were found under the tree with the track of the snake. The chain of evidence was undeniable. Is there anything you do not understand?"

"Nothing, my dear Holmes, nothing. You are wonderful."

"No, Watson, logical. I am glad the young lady is vindicated," he added as he reached for the bicycle pump.

AFTER THOMAS W. LAWSON

WHEN I said the value of property in Eden would increase, the System laughed. Gabriel himself denounced me as a liar, but wise angels bought land in Eden.

What was the result? Within seven days Adam and Eve both moved in, several improvements were made, and, under the name of Paradise Park, Eden became the most valuable spot of land on the earth.

But the System was at work. They sent their special agent, the serpent, and through him bribed and corrupted both Adam and Eve, and drove them out.

But in spite of the System I will have right done. The value of Eden has decreased, but I now announce that I will soon have, through my brokers, Adam and Eve, a new proposition called Cain. I advise all to take stock in Cain—it will succeed and pay well.

AFTER ARTHUR BRISBANE

IN another part of the JOURNAL a full ACCOUNT is given of the EDEN EPISODE, but we desire to say a few words about it HERE.

We do NOT blame Eve. It is natural for WOMAN to FALL (into the arms of a man).

Eve only proved her MATERNAL INSTINCT. She thought of her CHILDREN.

She knew that WITHOUT apples her LITTLE ONES would be DEPRIVED of one of the greatest JOYS of YOUTH. They would NEVER be ABLE to boast of the PIE that MOTHER MADE.

She sacrificed her own HAPPINESS for THEIRS.

We honor her NOBLE DEVOTION.

AFTER PETER F. DUNNE

"HINNESSY," said Mr. Dooley, "I wuz raiding a most intristin' book this marnin', called 'Jenny Sis'! Ye shud git it. It has Mary Correlli baten seven ways."

"Is thot so?" replied Mr. Hennessy. "An' phwat is ut about?"

"'Tis all about a little gal named Eve an' her affinity, Adam. An' a most hivinly toime they hed fer a whoile. Nothin' ter do the whole day long but set in the sun an' grow fat. But, will yez belave me, they wa'n't satisfied aven wid thot! This gal Eve didn't loike ter be fat at all, an' along came a sarphant—an' a divil of a feller he wuz, too—tillen' her that apples would rayjuice the fish.

"Now, 'tis a well known fact that in thim days a man would ez soon ate apples ez a Jew would pork—'twas a great sacrilige. But this gal Eve wuz sit on rayjucin', an' her an' this on-howly sarphant by in by talked Adam round ter the same way av thinkin'. Will, they had wan most beautiful faste on thim apples, but after it wuz over a whole rigimint av angils come an' ixcommunicated thim frum the place where they lived, an' hung out a 'For Rint' sign. 'Tis a sad indin', very sad indade, but 'tis a foine story, all the same, an' ye shud git ut an' raid ut."

BUSHIDO

By SVETOZAR TONJOROFF

YOUNG Tudor learned many things about the Japanese code of honor from Jito San before he was ordered home to the Presidio to be court-martialed. The story is told over the Scotch and soda at every mess from Luzon to Mindanao that the virus of the tropics entered his blood the moment he set foot at Manila. The true inwardness of the affair that brought shame to him is better known at Tokio than at Washington.

Lieutenant Frederick Van Namm Tudor's specialty was engineering. A keen civilian who had taken a comprehensive view of the Philippines from his desk in a great granite building on the Potomac had picked him out, contrary to tradition, as a suitable person to make a study of the defensive strength of the islands. When Tudor arrived at the other side of the earth he found life a drab and desultory thing. At the beginning he received a square envelope or two, addressed in a woman's hand, by every mail steamer that came in. For a while he sent a letter back as regularly. As the weeks crept by he discovered that the correspondence involved too much labor for a hot climate. Before he had been in the Orient two months he decided that all was vanity and gave up his letter writing as a mortification of the mind. That did not happen, however, until he had seen a brand-new victoria, with a wine-colored body and coal-black horses, on the Luneta as the sun was setting. There were Japanese servants on the box and in the seat was an exquisite little Japanese lady—a fluff of flowers and a flutter of silks—

who shaded herself with a wine-colored parasol.

That evening Tudor asked questions at the mess. A broad grin ran round the table when he described the lady of the victoria. She was a "masterpiece in old ivory," a "pale chrysanthemum just out of the bud," a "pond lily at the dawn of a day in June."

When he spoke in that fashion the suspicion was born that some phase of disorder was developing under his helmet.

"Come, old fellow, stop talking rot and have another highball," protested a junior feelingly—for Tudor was well liked in the garrison.

Tudor accepted the second clause of the suggestion, shoved his glass toward the white-coated Chinese "boy" who was officiating as captain of the bottles, and returned to the previous subject of conversation. The Major peered at him apprehensively from under his bushy eyebrows.

"Who is she?" persisted Tudor, coloring slightly. "How am I to get an introduction to her?"

Whereat the laugh became general.

"You seem amused!" he retorted, looking at the junior who had offered friendly advice.

"We are," explained the Major, who was a bachelor.

"Might I ask why?"

This in an injured tone.

"Because nobody bothers about an introduction to Jito San," volunteered a lieutenant, taking the words out of the mouth of the senior officer of the mess.

"O-oh!" exclaimed Tudor, his child-like eyes opening wide.

"A-ah!" chorused the mess to a man.

So it came about that the Major took him aside after dinner and talked to him as a father might talk to a son who is suspected of being bent upon making a fool of himself. It was straight talk and might have been of some avail with a less imaginative youngster than Tudor, whose blood was on fire with the mixed drink of the tropics and hard liquor that was not bad in itself.

On the next day after sunset—for Tudor had not yet succeeded in emancipating himself from a remnant of home prejudices—he drove in a rickety hired victoria to the city wall and beyond. When he had reached a cool-looking bamboo house with a Japanese lantern glowing on either side of the lintel he ordered the *cochero* to stop.

From that time on the mess saw little of him. At headquarters even the enlisted men knew that he was working hard. The Colonel, while Tudor bent over his prints and his papers, looked hard at him once or twice, grunted to himself and went about his own immediate business. One day, when Tudor was away on a service trip to Cavite, the commandant sent an orderly to the bamboo house beyond the wall. The wine-colored victoria drew up before the door soon after the orderly had returned. The Colonel turned in his swivel chair when he heard the patter of sandals and the rustle of a silken kimono behind him.

"Jito San," he began severely, "this thing must stop."

She raised frightened eyes to him for a fleeting moment. Then her head bent low, and she stood silent with arms folded upon her breast, as if she were awaiting the fall of the executioner's knife. The Colonel gazed at her in wonderment.

"What is the matter, Jito San?"

He spoke less sternly this time.

"Unworthy life of Jito San property of honorable Colonel," she pleaded in a voice that trembled as a flower shivers at the kiss of the wanton wind on the slopes of Fujiyama.

"I want you to let Mr. Tudor alone," he went on, frowning as if he sought to make amends for his momentary softening.

The flower-decked head bent lower. The perfume of sandalwood permeated the noonday warmth with a gentle exhalation, as delicate and vaguely subtle as the soul of the East.

"The honorable command shall be obeyed, but—"

"But what?" questioned the Colonel.

"It will break the unworthy life of Jito San."

Her voice had sunk so low that it was but as the echo of an echo.

The Colonel was prompted to laugh at first, but a convulsive movement of her shoulders caused him to grow grave instead.

"Do you love him, Jito San?" he asked kindly; for all good men honor the love of a woman, even if she be a dweller in a bamboo house beyond the city walls. Besides, a soldier seven thousand miles away from the white man's country is not the most suitable person in the world to deal with an Oriental woman. The Russians found that out a few minutes before the act of piracy in the harbor of Chemulpo which the enemies of the Czar have set down in their text-books as a battle.

"Do you love him?" he repeated, when she had failed to answer his question.

Her head bobbed up and down suddenly with the odd, jerky motion of a mechanical doll. The Colonel drew a breath reflectively, as if he were recalling something that he had forgotten long ago.

"All right, Jito San," he concluded; "but remember, I shall hold you responsible if anything happens to Mr. Tudor."

A half-smothered little cry broke from her. She smote the matting with her forehead as if she were at a shrine of Buddha. Once, twice, thrice, she touched the floor with humbled head, gurgling her gratitude that the knife of the executioner had not fallen. The Colonel stirred uneasily, touched a bell

at his side and the orderly entered, his hand to his forehead.

"See this lady to her carriage, Peters," he commanded briefly.

"They are all alike," muttered the Colonel softly to himself as the carriage wheels crunched upon the graveled roadway and rolled by the windows. "After all, a woman is a woman—be she white, yellow or nondescript."

Even as he was reflecting, sapiently, the boom of cannon reverberated dully from Cavite. The windows shivered with the concussion. He counted eleven guns—a captain's salute. The firing came from the warships in the roadstead. The echo of the last shot had hardly died upon the sultry air when a telegram was placed in his hands. He read it hastily:

Rear Admiral Gerhardt presents his compliments to Colonel Geary and begs to inform Colonel Geary that a captain's salute is being fired by the fleet for the cruiser *Satsuma*, of the Imperial Japanese Navy, which is in the offing.

The Colonel murmured a malediction upon the Japanese and the Orient in general, for he hated to see powder wasted upon the heathen. Then he gave a curt order through the telephone at his elbow and the land batteries promptly roared out a welcome to the *Satsuma*.

II

WHEN Tudor returned to Manila—within-the-walls that night his mind was full of the things he had seen while he was away. After he had bathed and put on fresh linen he drove to the bamboo house and went straight to the desk which he had had installed for himself in the room that opened into the rear garden, where the wistaria blossoms nodded into the windows. While Jito San, humming a little song of welcome, was bustling about the business of making tea, he drew out of his pocket some papers that contained the summary of his investigations at Cavite, and set about jotting data upon the margins of blueprints that he had taken out of the drawer. He chuckled in-

wardly as he contemplated the completeness of the report which he was preparing for the enlightenment of the civilian in the great granite building on the Potomac. The rough draft was before him now. There was little worth knowing about the defensive equipment of the Philippines that was not discernible to the trained eye on the sections of drawing paper that lay at his elbow in a neat pile. He had not taken it to headquarters. Instead, he had worked on it during many a night amid the peace of the retreat which the Orient had given to him out of the wealth of its strange things. That map was over and above the task that had been put upon him. It would be the great effort of his career. It would vindicate the judgment of the man who had sent him out, and would cover a multitude of sins which he had committed or might commit. Had Tudor been with the Russians at Liao-Yang or Mukden or Harbin just before the war broke out he would never have thought of doing business that way; but he was new to the East and knew nothing of Bushido.

His thoughts were suddenly distracted by the caressing rustle of sandals upon the mat. Jito San curled herself at his feet like a glossy spaniel. He saw that she had been crying.

"What is troubling you, little girl?" he asked as his hand stole to her shoulder.

She drew herself away gently. Her head drooped forward until it almost touched the mat.

"What is it, Jito San?"

He sought to draw her to himself, but her body resisted with a reluctant stiffening.

"Come, won't you tell me what the matter is?"

Then the floodgates of her tears were loosed and she wept sobbingly, her shoulders heaving with the tumult of her emotion. That was the first time a woman had wept that way to him, and the youngster was disconcerted.

"What is it, Jito San?"

He turned his chair around and bent over her.

"Honorable Colonel—" she moaned, swallowing her sobs.

"The honorable Colonel?" he questioned in surprise. "What has the Colonel been doing?"

"Him say Jito San must—must leave you alone!"

This with a catch in the throat.

"He said that you must leave me alone?"

There was a wrinkle upon the usually smooth forehead.

"Yes, Sun of My Morning. The Colonel he say Jito San shall be much punished if—if something happen to Meester Tudor."

"And what did you say?"

"Jito San she say unworthily she love you truly."

She raised herself up and lifted her eyes to his. They were swimming in tears. She leaned lightly against him. The odor of the sandalwood went to his head as if it had been old wine.

"Look here, little girl," he went on, "I don't want you to bother your head about the Colonel. And I don't want you to leave me alone. I should be very lonely if you did."

"Yes, but honorable Colonel speak to you also. Byemby you go 'way and make Jito San lonely."

She smiled through the rain clouds upon her lashes.

"Don't you worry, Jito San. See what I have brought you from Mindoro."

Tudor took out of his coat pocket a gold ring, curiously wrought in the form of the dragon of China, two rubies gleaming for its eyes. She gazed at it with the open-eyed wonder of a child.

"That for Jito San?" she asked breathlessly.

"Yes; give me your hand."

She extended the right hand, wondering.

"No, the left," he corrected her, smiling.

He placed the ring upon the third finger. It fitted perfectly. She looked at him with questioning eyes.

"Do you know what that means, Jito San?"

"No, Sun of My Morning."

"That means that I'll stick by you whatever the Colonel says—or whatever anybody else may say."

"And Jito San . . ."

She flung her arms about his knees and her voice broke again.

". . . Jito San cut off this hand if—if something happen to Meester Tudor."

"Nonsense, Jito San," laughed Tudor uneasily as he put his papers away and turned the key in the lock of the drawer. "What could happen to me? Is it not enough that I love you?"

"Oh, Jito San unworthily thank you, Samurai of America. Jito San cut off hand just like this if she not true to you."

She passed the index finger of her right hand about the wrist of her left, as if she were severing it with a knife.

III

WET khaki is not pleasant to the body. Tudor thought so as he bent to the saddle to shield his face from a driving rain, on the road from the South. It had been a tedious journey and the wetness of the season, together with the native food upon which he had subsisted, had not added to the pleasures of life. Therefore, when he saw the first of the lights of Manila, like stragglers by the roadside, he thanked his invisible stars and touched the spurs to his horse. The two mounted men who followed him were put to it to keep up with the pace he set them. At the Conquistador Inn, two miles from the city wall, he drew rein, turned to the enlisted men and dismissed them. Then he plied the spurs once more and started at a sharp gallop for the bamboo house.

The prospect of dry clothing and a roof was vivid before him. He reflected that from the crest of the elevation ahead the lights at the lintel would become visible. When he shut his eyes he could see the friendly gleam of the lanterns, subdued and gentle as was the woman of Nippon whose hands trimmed them. Those lights had be-

come the outward token of her love for him. From the night on which they had led him to her threshold she herself had kept them burning, with each setting of the sun.

As he thought of Jito San Tudor had a moment's itching sense of having made a fool of himself. The realization was no strong tribute to the keenness of his perception. The ladies of the garrison, from the Colonel's wife down, had been looking askance at him for three months past—for there are things to which women cannot shut their eyes even at a remote outpost of civilization, where the line between that which may be and that which may not is blurred by the exigencies of life. He felt suddenly hot in the face when he recalled the angle at which the charming chin of a captain's sister from Boston had been elevated when he met her on the Luneta just before he started South. Yet he consoled himself with the reflection that his folly had brought him its compensations, and that he had already paid the price therefor in full. Besides, he would soon be in the glow of the lights at the lintel.

At the very brow of the hill he glanced eagerly forward. Then he slackened speed, peered ahead and drew the bridle taut with a jerk. There was darkness where the lights should have been. What could be the matter? he wondered. Could anything have happened to Jito San? Never before had she left the lanterns unlit. The saturated khaki seemed to become acutely uncomfortable. What if the lady of Nippon should be dead?

He dropped the bridle on the horse's neck and the animal, with a whinny, loped ahead, sniffing the oats. Soon it stopped stock-still. Tudor looked up. The bamboo house loomed upon him, ghostly large in the night. There was neither gleam nor stir within nor without. The dreary chirp of crickets came from the garden beyond. The door yawned wide open, leading into the heavier gloom within the threshold.

He slid from the saddle, threw the bridle over the horse's neck and fum-

bled about his pockets for his match-safe. He stumbled up the steps to the veranda, struck a light and entered. The faded scent of sandalwood seemed to him as the odor of tuberose in the house of death. His footsteps rustled eerily upon the matting. The flame of the match cast dancing shadows upon the wall.

His lips were compressed suddenly with a sense of doom and desolation. Some small marauding animal scurried by him to the door. He looked down. A dark spot on the matting riveted his gaze. He stared at it with dilating pupils.

The light burned low to his fingers, and he threw the match from him with a twinge of sharp pain. Again a match sputtered and the darkness was lit up. Tudor bent slowly to the spot, as if he hoped it might have vanished. He held the light down to it and saw that it was crimson. Close to it was another, and close to that yet another, each as large as a yen of Nippon. He followed the telltale drops to his desk in the room that opened on the back garden where the wistaria had nodded upon him.

He struck another match and looked about him. The room was in the disorder of war or hurried departure. The desk had been broken open. He thrust his hand into the drawer. Every scrap of paper had been taken out of it. On the desk was an envelope, and under that a small package. He tore the paper open and read the message:

SUN OF MY MORNING:

You will think that Jito San has not been true. It was duty to Nippon, law of Bushido, that has broken life of Jito San. Your honorable eyes will see herewith true token of devotion to Samurai of America. It is proof that Jito San love truly, but obligation to Emperor greater than life.

JITO SAN.

Tudor thrust the letter and the package into his pocket, staggered to the veranda, mounted his horse and galloped straight to the Colonel's quarters. Colonel Geary looked up from his book to see a ghost shivering before him.

"Colonel Geary, I have come to surrender myself," he mumbled.

The Colonel rose to his feet.

"What do you mean, Tudor?"

The youngster placed the letter and the package in his superior's hands, and told him of the things that had come to pass. The commandant glanced over the letter and his face became purple with wrath. Then he swore for full three minutes without ceasing.

"You may consider yourself under arrest, Mr. Tudor," he announced when he had recovered his breath. "I

wish to God I had kept an eye on those Jap officers when they came ashore and went to the house of this Jezebel. They took her back with them under our very noses, weighed anchor and put off to sea—and may I be damned if they didn't drive right by my windows!"

Then he opened the package. A small hand, cut off at the wrist as if with a scalpel, dropped to the floor. Upon the third finger was the ring which Tudor had given to Jito San.



HIS ITALIAN TOUR

By WALTER TRUMBULL

The Bridge Fiend Speaks:

THE trip across was rather slow;
I recollect the boat rolled so,
Really, we were scarcely able
To keep cards upon the table.

Naples? Like fools we showed our packs
And had to pay a custom tax.
The light was poor at the hotel—
One couldn't see the *dummy* well.

I don't remember Rome. Oh, yes,
That's where I took that Club *finesse*
When playing with Lord What's-his-name;
It saved two tricks and won the game.

Florence was marvelous. 'Twas there
I held that combination rare,
One hundred aces, in my hand;
It was my deal—I made a "*Grand*."

The railroads? Say, don't talk to me
Of railroading in Italy!
It's quite impossible to play;
You run through tunnels all the way.

Venice is nice—but damp, you know.
The cards all stick together so.
At Genoa we took the ship
And ended our Italian trip.

Travel, of course, improves the mind,
But, just the same, I am inclined
To think you find as many dubs
Playing abroad as in our clubs.

THE COMING OF FRANCES

By LOUISE WINTER

"AND never, my dear Hilda, never marry a man with country relations, for if you do they'll be descending upon you at all inopportune seasons!"

Hilda Graham laughed. "Then the coming of cousin Frances is inopportune, and from what Ebert said I fancied—"

"That she was going to be a joyous addition to our house party?"

"Exactly." She spoke with enthusiasm.

"She is his favorite cousin. We went to Torrington for her wedding. She's small and plump, she has a snub nose and she wears glasses!"

"When you last saw her."

"Women don't develop in a town like Torrington." Mrs. Dent was urban to her finger tips. "Since then she has achieved widowhood. Her mouse-like husband, professor of Greek in the local academy, ran away with one of his pupils."

"And she divorced him?"

"No. Frances has ideas. She went after them and reasoned with the girl till she persuaded her to return to her home."

"And the professor?"

"She turned him adrift, but she wouldn't free herself legally, and then, fortunately, he died. I imagine she is still wearing the willow."

"Why is she coming to you?"

"Ebert lived with her mother after his parents died, and when she wrote the other day that Frances needed a change, he had a rash moment and extended the invitation, which was accepted by telegraph, and she arrives tonight with the Raymonds and Wayne Harrow."

Hilda Graham held out her slim left hand and studied it intently. "So he is coming after all! There were bets on, Mavourneen, that you wouldn't get him," she said musingly.

Kitty Dent flushed. "He's entertained us a lot this winter, so why shouldn't we reciprocate?" she demanded hotly.

"And, besides, if Ebert has cousin Frances, you must not be left to mope."

"Don't be horrid and insinuating, Hilda. That's the worst of you clever women, you're always seeing situations."

"No, closing our eyes to them. There, I'll be good and pretend I think you invited the prince of millionaires for me, knowing how sadly I am in need of a man to pay my bills."

"I thought you made a pile out of your last book."

"I did, but, as usual, I managed to spend more. There's no danger of Frances's annexing him?"

"Snub nose and glasses? Hilda, don't be absurd!" And they both laughed.

The Dents entertained on such an elaborate scale that most of their friends had long ago given up the problem of fitting their expenditures to their income. They accepted the lavish hospitality and wondered how soon the crash would come.

The villa at Bar Harbor overlooking the sea, with its glass-inclosed piazzas, its wide halls, its elegantly appointed guest suites, was seldom without a merry, pleasure-seeking crowd, led by both host and hostess.

Dinner was the only formal meal of

the day, but it was almost a State ceremonial, and tonight things had been planned more lavishly than ever in honor of the first visit of Wayne Harrow, a captain of industry, forty-five, a bachelor, a *bon vivant* and a multi-millionaire.

The guests arrived at such an hour that Ebert Dent was deputed to meet them and have them shown immediately to their rooms in order that the women might have plenty of time to dress for dinner.

Kitty's toilet progressed leisurely. She wanted to look her best, and her maid was alternately coaxed and scolded, as the result failed to please a capitious mistress.

Her husband's knock interrupted an important decision in regard to a hair ornament, and her answer was very short.

Ebert Dent, nothing daunted, trotted briskly into the room, followed by a woman swathed in a chiffon veil and a loose traveling coat.

"Here's Frances, Kitty. I brought her in to see you. She had a beastly trip and her head's aching, so I ordered tea sent to her room." He spoke in short, choppy sentences, and as he finished he gave Frances a slight push in his wife's direction.

Kitty rose and held out her hand. She did not think it necessary to peck at the cheek exposed after Frances had lifted her veil slightly. "So sorry you feel ill. Perhaps you won't care to dress for dinner. If so, you can dine in your room. We want you to feel at home with us," she said carelessly.

Then Frances spoke. She had a rich, deep voice, which vibrated under any stress of emotion. "To tell the truth, Cousin Kate, I am hungry. I missed my lunch, and the sail upset me, but after I've had my tea I'll be all right." She came a step nearer. "I'm quite ignorant about visiting, so I'm going to throw myself frankly upon your mercy and ask what to wear for dinner. I've a white organdie cut with a Dutch neck, and a black lace dress made out of mother's shawl. But that hasn't any sleeves," she added thoughtfully.

Kitty gasped. Two evening frocks for a week's visit? She had a mental vision of a stiff white muslin and its impression on Wayne Harrow, arbiter of fashion. Then she answered: "I think the white organdie will do for tonight. Save the black lace for a more formal occasion."

Frances thanked her and left the room followed by Ebert Dent.

Kitty Dent was showing Wayne Harrow the view of the bay from the west window when Frances descended the staircase, and Hilda Graham was the first to perceive her. She gave a start; she was unprepared for the dainty, girlish figure that fluttered into the drawing-room.

In spite of Kitty's scorn, five years had changed Frances Yale. She had learned to make the most of herself even in Torrington. Her hair curled naturally, and she wore it loosely coiled at the nape of her neck. Her skin was marvelously fair; her short nose had an adorable tilt heavenward; her mouth drooped pathetically at the corners and her near-sighted brown eyes, bereft of their disfiguring spectacles, were singularly attractive. Her gown of sheer organdie, simply made, showed the slim, girlish lines of her figure and left her pretty white throat and dimpled elbows exposed. She looked both young and unsophisticated, and Hilda Graham had a spasm of regret. This was a child who had suffered, and now she came into a world for which she was not prepared, a world of pleasure where nothing but the present mattered, where hearts were crushed and tossed aside because they were in the way, and where self-interest forged to the front and held its place in defiance of every human emotion.

"There's your cousin Frances," Hilda whispered, tapping Dent on the arm with her fan.

"Where? The deuce! What's she done to herself? She looks younger than she did five years ago!" Then he trotted off to Frances's rescue. She appeared self-possessed and acknowledged the few introductions calmly.

"Do you play bridge, Mrs. Yale?"

Hilda asked, making room for Frances to sit beside her on the sofa.

"Oh, yes; it has quite superseded progressive euchre in Torrington, but we only play for prizes. I suppose that must sound insipid to you." Frances had read of the gay doings of the smart set in the local papers.

"No, but here we are in the habit of playing high. May I give you a bit of advice? Don't play unless you are prepared to lose a lot of money."

Frances never faltered. "What do you mean by a lot of money?" she asked. "A hundred dollars?"

Hilda smiled. "Perhaps a thousand," she returned.

"But suppose I win!"

"The chances are against it—but, then, I don't know how well you play."

"And I might have a poor partner."

"That is true." Hilda dropped the subject. Bridge was a passion with her. She had obeyed a rare impulse, for she detested meddling, but the appealing quality of Frances's soft brown eyes had been too strong to be resisted.

Frances went in to dinner with Ted Connors, who played golf all day and bridge all night, and who could talk only on those subjects.

"Who is the little girl?" Wayne Harrow asked. He was a big blond man, with charming manners.

"My husband's cousin," replied Kitty Dent tersely. "But she's not a little girl; she's a widow."

Harrow looked amused. "Ah, a widow in white muslin, with the face of a Greuze maiden," he commented.

Kitty stiffened. "Don't laugh, Wayne. She's been unfortunate and Ebert is fond of her."

"I'm not laughing. What a brute he must have been!"

"Who?" Kitty was not gifted with insight.

"The husband, of course."

"He wasn't a brute, but he did a foolish thing; then, fortunately for Frances, he died."

"Ah!" Harrow stole another glance at the woman he had so ably characterized.

Frances was talking volubly to Ebert of matters that interested both, and her face was alight with eagerness as she discussed the changes five years had brought about in Torrington.

"You must be very rich, Ebert," she said, after a time, her eyes taking in the luxury of her surroundings.

Dent shrugged his shoulders. "You mean we appear rich."

"Do you live beyond your income?" Frances was very direct.

"Perhaps some day we'll catch up if we have luck. You see that man on Kitty's right? He's the biggest operator in Wall Street today, and if he gave me a tip on the market I'd pull out of this beautifully." Dent tried not to betray his feverish anxiety in making the above statement. Not even Kitty knew how much he counted on a favorable termination to Harrow's visit.

Frances turned her eyes in the direction of the man who represented so much power and met his gaze, curious and compelling. The color rose slowly to her cheek. "So that is Wayne Harrow! I had fancied him different," she remarked. "Won't he give you a tip?"

"Perhaps, if we work it right."

"I should think he'd be glad to help his friends."

"We're not his friends."

"He's a guest in your house."

"In our world that doesn't necessarily mean friendship."

Frances was silent a moment. "I should like to help you, Ebert," she volunteered.

"I wish you could." Then a thought came to him. He remembered Harrow's fondness for simple ballads. "Have you kept up your singing?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Then you must sing for me after dinner. Will you?"

"Certainly, Cousin Ebert."

And remembering her promise, Frances went to the piano and played softly, little things that did not interfere with the conversation going on about her, till, as she heard the hum of masculine

voices nearing the drawing-room, she burst into song, eager to prove her ability. She had a full, throaty contralto, with a sobbing note in the lower register that made you overlook the fact that she had not been trained abroad. It was a simple thing she had chosen, and she did not look up as someone leaned over the piano. She took it for granted that it was Dent. But as she finished Wayne Harrow murmured:

"What a voice, you woman of surprises!"

Frances blushed and tried to meet his eyes bravely.

"Do you sing 'Danny Deever'?" he went on, condescending as one would to a child.

"Yes."

"Then sing it, for I know you can."

Frances struck the first chords obediently, then her voice rang out, running the gamut of terror, pity and despair, till Harrow, always a prodigal in emotion, felt the blood rise to his head and his pulse throb violently.

Kitty came up as the last note died away. "Where did you learn to sing?" he demanded.

"In Torrington."

"You learned many things in Torrington," suggested Harrow.

"A few," Frances answered simply. She raised her eyes and met the warm admiration he did not try to disguise.

Kitty fumed inwardly. She had not schemed and plotted to bring Wayne Harrow to Bar Harbor, to have him dawdle over the piano while Frances sang ballads.

"Mr. Harrow, we are waiting to make up our table," she said in her staccato tones.

"I'm coming." Then as he turned reluctantly to follow his hostess, he added, "Do you play bridge, Mrs. Yale?"

"Not as you play it," and Frances laughed. "But if I won't be in the way, I'd like to look on."

"Do. It is a liberal education to watch Mrs. Dent play."

"How can you suggest such a thing, when you know how nervous it makes me to have anyone hanging over my

chair at the bridge table?" retorted Kitty.

"Then watch me. You won't learn anything, but I shall enjoy having you near."

And Frances sat back of Wayne Harrow for two hours watching the game. He played with Mrs. Hume against Kitty and Ted Conners. Perhaps his attention wandered, or perhaps he resented being forced to play against his inclination, but he lost steadily until his partner's stock of patience was exhausted.

"I thought you said you played the heart convention, Mr. Harrow!" she remarked sharply.

"So I do, always with ladies," but he smiled over his shoulder at Frances, not at Mrs. Hume, and the latter was furious.

It went from bad to worse. Frances's simple, girlish manner, which Kitty spitefully declared was assumed, made her a general favorite with the men. Ted Conners gave her her first lesson in golf; Charlie Raymond took her sailing in his half-rater; Gus Hume drove her behind his spirited team, and Ebert chanted her praises on all occasions. Wayne Harrow made no secret of his infatuation. He frankly refused to play bridge, and spent most of the evenings beside her at the piano, while she sang old favorites to him.

"She's deliberately setting her cap for Wayne Harrow!" Kitty cried tragically to her husband.

"If she wins him, it won't be a bad thing for us to have him in the family," Ebert chuckled.

Kitty thought it all over and changed her tactics. Instead of throwing obstacles in their way, she helped them to be together as much as possible, and she asked Frances to stay on till the end of the month. After Harrow's visit was over he came back several times on his yacht, and the engagement was announced before the end of the summer. There was no reason for delay and the wedding took place from the Dents' house in the fall.

Frances was as good as her word.

Harrow was grateful and Ebert Dent got his tip on the market.

The day after the wedding Hilda Graham stopped in to see Kitty.

"It doesn't seem possible that a woman could be so delightfully naive in this century. She came, she saw, she conquered by the might of her simplicity—and yet was she really simple?" Hilda was a novelist of the modern school.

Kitty drew up her chair confidentially. "I can't keep it to myself any longer. Hilda, she isn't a bit simple. She's as worldly as the rest of us. She's worse—she's a deep schemer. After she left Bar Harbor the maid brought me a book she'd forgotten. It was a

scrap book filled with newspaper clippings about the six richest unmarried men in America. It contained the life of each one, his picture, a detailed account of his tastes, his habits, in fact every bit of information she could gather about him. They were arranged in order, and the last pages were devoted to Wayne Harrow. The last entry was a line to the effect that he was to visit us in August." She paused to take breath.

"Ah, I see! Go on." Hilda was tremendously interested.

"Well, the letter telling us she was in poor health and needed a change was dated the day after she saw that announcement!"



THE HELPLESS ONES

By WILBERFORCE JENKINS

I HAVE to weep o'er stories that they print in magazines,
So full am I of sympathy with all those woeful scenes
In which the authors mix the folks—poor souls!—that they put through
Such dreadful complications full of misery and rue.

In real life you can help a man, no matter what his pain.
'Tis possible to lift him up onto his feet again.
If he does wrong, there's hope ahead, if someone points the way,
Or if he's plunged in darkness, you can lead him to the day.

But in the magazines, alas, there's no escape at all.
Once printed, bound and published and spread out upon a stall,
Their doom is sealed forevermore, and of their bitter cup
They drink, and drink, and drink, and drink, till someone burns them up.



MRS. GOSSIP—They do say that her husband has acquired locomotor ataxia.

MRS. PARVENUE—I don't think much of those cheap cars; my husband has an imported one.

LES CORBEAUX

Par MAURICE LEVEL

QUAND il eut fini sa soupe, le père Camus repoussa son assiette, et, les coudes sur la table, les poings au menton, se mit à regarder l'âtre fixement, suivant les lueurs et les ombres que la flamme étalait sur les cendres.

Dans le fond de la salle, sa femme allait et venait, remuant les plats, rangeant les assiettes. Une nappe de lumière descendue de la petite lampe coiffée de son abat-jour vert flottait entre le plancher et le plafond rayé de poutres sombres, éclairant seulement ses jupes et ses hanches. Elle ferma le buffet, repoussa les tiroirs et demanda :

— Tu ne veux pas autre chose ?

— Non, fit Camus.

Et il se mit à siffloter un air entre les dents.

La femme écarta un rideau, colla son front à la vitre, revint auprès de la table et s'assit :

— Tu ne dis rien... A quoi penses-tu ?

Il laissa tomber sur elle un regard trouble et dit lentement :

— A quoi je pense?...

Puis, sa voix changea et il acheva d'un ton détaché :

— Je pense qu'il ferait bon rester ici, au chaud, mais qu'il n'est pas loin de neuf heures, et qu'il me faut partir si je ne veux pas manquer mon train.

Il passa un manteau, enfonça sa casquette sur sa tête, prit sa trique dans un coin, et s'arrêta une seconde sur le pas de la porte.

— Tu n'auras pas peur toute seule ?

Elle se mit à rire. Il releva d'un coup d'épaule son caban qui glissait.

— Alors je m'en vais. Ne m'attends pas avant demain soir.

... La nuit était profonde et calme. Le

chemin, blanc de neige, se confondait avec les champs. Au lieu de descendre droit devant lui, vers le village dont les feux brillaient au fond de la vallée, il prit par un sentier, se retournant de temps en temps vers sa maison qui semblait s'enfoncer à mesure qu'il descendait la côte. Le perron disparut d'abord, puis les fenêtres; le toit de chaume toucha le sol; la fumée qui montait toute droite devint moins épaisse, fut un nuage, une ombre, et il ne distingua plus rien que la campagne, blanche à perte de vue, hérissée par endroits de monticules et d'arbres dont les branches ployaient sous les flocons, comme sous des fruits lourds et savoureux.

Alors, il s'arrêta, pour reconnaître le sentier, tâtant le sol du bout de son gourdin, avançant les pieds avec précaution. Des pierres roulèrent sous son sabot. Il recula d'un pas, et prêta l'oreille. Un petit bruit sec de caillou crevant la glace vint jusqu'à lui; il murmura : "Je suis dans la bonne route." Et s'étant assis sur un tas de fagots, le manteau ramené sur les genoux, il réfléchit.

Depuis trois jours, la même pensée le tenait si fort que son cerveau s'ouvrait au point exact où il l'avait laissée, ainsi qu'un livre de chevet s'ouvre à la page cent fois relue.

Sa femme le trompait, sa femme qu'il avait prise sans un sou; elle le trompait avec Pierre le bouvier! D'abord, il avait cru que c'étaient médisances de jaloux, et puis à force de relire la lettre sans signature qui dénonçait les coupables, il avait fini par douter... puis par croire. Bien sûr, il avait eu tort de la prendre, si belle fille, si solide et si jeune, lui qui avait vingt-cinq ans de

plus qu'elle. Il ne l'avait pas rendue malheureuse, pourtant, satisfaisant tous ses caprices, attentif à ses moindres désirs. Elle était la plus riche et la mieux habillée du village, et, pour le récompenser de tout cela!... Dans sa mémoire, mille souvenirs se bousculaient: des silences, des mauvaises humeurs sans raison, des petites choses, inexplicables d'abord, et qui deviennent si claires quand on sait!... Malgré tout, il hésitait encore, et, voulant en avoir le cœur net, prétextant un voyage, il avait pris pour quitter sa maison le sentier par où le galant ne manquerait pas de passer afin de n'être pas rencontré sur la route.

Au loin, il lui sembla entendre un bruit de pas étouffés par la neige. Il courba l'échine et se ramassa sur lui-même. Le bruit devint plus proche; une ombre se haussa en travers du sentier, grandit, et quand elle fut devant lui, il se dressa brusquement.

— Halte-là!

L'ombre s'arrêta. Camus distingua un homme, reconnut ses traits, l'empoigna au collet et lui cria dans la figure: — Ah! ce coup-ci, je te tiens, crapule!

— Vous vous trompez, bégaya l'homme, vous...

Camus se mit à rire d'un rire terrible:

— Ah! ah! Je me trompe! Tu n'es pas Pierre le bouvier, peut-être?... Dis-moi un peu ce que tu viens faire par ici, à cette heure?... Tu ne réponds pas?... Je vais te le dire, moi: tu vas chez ma femme, dans ma maison!

— Mais pas du tout...

Le vieux grinça des dents:

— Tais-toi, menteur! Tu y vas!... Tu voulais la voir? Eh bien! je vais t'y amener! Allez! Marche!

Et il le poussa de toutes ses forces, hurlant comme pour faire partir un cheval rétif:

— Allez! Avance! Hue!

— Puisque je vous dis, répétait l'autre à demi étranglé, que je n'y vais pas...

— Avance!

— Puisque je vous répète...

En se débattant, l'homme glissa et tomba à la renverse. Pris d'une rage folle, Camus le voyant à terre, se mit à

lui taper sur la figure à coups de pied, à coups de poing. Le gars se releva d'un coup de reins, essuya d'un revers de main sa face éclaboussée de sang et lui cria:

— Eh bien! oui! J'y vais, chez ta femme! Tu es content? Et j'y retournerai, parce qu'elle ne veut plus de toi, elle ne veut plus...

Mais, comme il ouvrait encore la bouche pour cracher des injures, le vieux lui abattit sa trique sur la tête. Il poussa un grand cri, recula de deux pas... s'effondra... disparut...

Il y eut une demi-seconde de silence effrayant, quelques cailloux roulèrent en claquant... un bruit se fit entendre, large, profond...

Camus, le bâton à la main, les yeux dilatés, écouta... Rien ne remuait... Rien ne vivait autour de lui... Il bégaya:

— Je l'ai jeté dans le ravin!

Et, tout d'un coup, la terreur aux flancs, suant l'horreur et l'épouvante, il se mit à courir.

En apercevant sa maison, un peu de calme lui revint, avec une sorte d'orgueil. Il se sentait plus grand d'avoir frappé si fort. Il levait le poing pour heurter aux volets quand la porte s'ouvrit. Sur le seuil, il aperçut sa femme qui, la lampe à la main, le corps penché, disait d'une voix tendre:

— C'est toi, mon chéri?

Il fut sur le point de lui sauter à la gorge et de crier, avec une joie sauvage: — Ton chéri! Va le rejoindre dans le trou!

Mais il se ressaisit:

— C'est moi, Camus!

Le rond de clarté que la lampe étendait sur la neige se mit à danser, et la femme recula. Il entra. Sans rien dire, il défit son manteau, jeta sa casquette sur la table, retira ses sabots, et s'assit. Il grelottait près du foyer ardent et parlait bas.

— J'ai manqué mon train... La route est si mauvaise...

Il se leva:

— Si on allait se coucher?

Dans le lit, il se remit à trembler. Il sentait sa femme près de lui, il écoutait son souffle, épiait ses mouvements et songeait avec une joie sauvage:

— Elle ne dort pas! Elle se demande pourquoi il n'est pas venu, s'il m'a vu... si je me doute... et elle a peur!... Et nul ne connaîtra jamais la vérité. Si quelque jour on retrouve le corps, on se dira: le bouvier s'est trompé de chemin et il est allé se jeter dans la carrière.

Mais, peu à peu, une terreur l'envahit:

— Si je ne l'avais pas tué, pourtant! S'il allait sortir mutilé, sanglant, et m'accuser, et dire: c'est Camus qui m'a poussé.

A cette pensée, une vision de gendarmes, de juges passa devant ses yeux, et il enfouit sa tête dans l'oreiller.

Au matin, il se leva, brisé de fatigue. La neige tombait sans arrêt. Tout le jour, il resta, assis auprès de la fenêtre, les yeux perdus entre le ciel épais et la campagne blanche, regardant parfois sa femme aller et venir. Elle avait les joues pâles, les yeux battus, et tressaillait au craquement d'une branche, à l'aboïement sonore et lointain d'un chien de ferme. Elle se mit à coudre, sans rien dire, puis laissa tomber l'ouvrage sur ses genoux... Le crépuscule descendit. La nuit vint. Camus, pour la première fois, rompit le silence.

— A quoi penses-tu? Tu ne peux plus coudre, il fait noir...

Elle murmura: "C'est vrai" et alluma la lampe. Il s'aperçut que de grandes larmes avaient laissé une traînée luisante sur ses joues; il détourna la tête.

Il ne ferma pas l'œil de la nuit, et, au soleil levant, reprit sa place de la veille, près de la fenêtre, le regard invinciblement attiré vers ce même coin d'horizon, devinant sous le tapis plus épais et

plus blanc le trou dans lequel *l'autre* avait roulé.

Ce fut ainsi pendant cinq jours; puis, un après-midi, la neige ayant cessé de tomber et le soleil jaunissant les nuages, il vit tournoyer un vol de corbeaux. Cela faisait sur le ciel morne une tache très noire et mouvante. De temps en temps, un des oiseaux se laissait choir, puis remontait, et d'autres descendaient, d'autres encore...

D'abord, il suivit machinalement leur manège, et, soudain, leurs cris traversant le silence, une réflexion lui vint:

— Mais ils sont au-dessus du trou!... Alors?... Ils viennent là, attirés par quelque chose... par une proie... par le corps de *l'autre*!...

Il repoussa sa chaise d'un geste si violent que sa femme leva les yeux vers lui, et, suivant son regard, aperçut, elle aussi, les corbeaux noirs dans le ciel pâle. Il pencha la tête de son côté, l'œil allumé de haine. Une grimace tira sa figure ridée, il ramassa sa chaise, se frotta les mains, alluma sa pipe, se rassa, et se mit à fumer, les mains aux poches, les jambes allongées.

La femme demeurait immobile, regardant les oiseaux. L'un d'eux s'enleva plus haut que les autres, tenant une loque dans son bec. Le vieux se mit à ricaner; et la femme, les yeux grands ouverts, joignit les mains et se cacha la tête dans son tablier.

Le jour baissait. L'ombre glissait des poutres au plancher. Les corbeaux innombrables montaient et descendaient d'un vol plus lourd, avec des appels moins stridents, et, peu à peu, mystérieuse et calme, la nuit se ferma sur le ciel morne.



MON AMI FIDÈLE

PAR THÉODORE BOTREL

TOUT le long des avoines folles,
Le long des grèves et des champs,
Viens, mon chien, toi qui me consoles
Des hommes ingrats et méchants.

"RINGING DOWN" ON THE THEATRICAL SEASON

By CHANNING POLLOCK

"'RINGING down' is a technical phrase," says The Lady Who Goes to the Theater With Me. "You ought to explain the meaning of it."

"Don't ask me to do that," I reply, writing the title of this article in capital letters across the top of the page. "Things are so much more attractive when one doesn't know what they mean. Dozens of critics—not to mention philosophers, dramatists and others—owe their reputations to that psychological phenomenon. I remember when I was called upon to review a season of grand opera—"

However, The Lady prevails. She generally does—or perhaps I should say, they generally do. In professional parlance, the words "ringing up" or "ringing down" refer to the curtain. A stage manager signals by touching a button that connects with a bell in the "fly gallery." The first note is called a "warning," and notifies the men at the ropes to make ready. At the second note the canvas is raised or lowered. When I spoke of "'Ringing Up' on the Theatrical Season" last October I meant that the amusement term was about to begin. Now I mean that it is about to end.

From the window at which I am scribbling I can see this end forecasted in the purple bloom of the lilacs, I can hear it in the song of the meadow lark and the whippoorwill. The Lady and a lot of other people so foolish or so unlucky that they will not or cannot come into the country know "the year is dying" because a vaudeville per-

formance is billed in front of the Metropolitan Opera House. Buffalo Bill is at Madison Square, the "summer shows" are announced and everybody who has earned a big enough salary long enough to be "distinguished" and a "veteran"—not to say a prosperous householder—is getting ready to take a benefit. Coney Island will be "open" presently, and then even the habitués of the Great White Way will guess that it is time to camphor-ball their evening clothes and get out their fishing tackle.

The conclusion has been reached in a burst of activity. April witnessed ten new productions—most of them made after Easter. The percentage of failures was considerably lower than usual, only one offering, "The Gay Life," proving an absolute fiasco. Even that performance pleased me. The Lady declares I have become a yokel, and insists that another fortnight out of town will fit me to enjoy a repertoire company's rendering of "Ten Nights in a Bar Room."

Perhaps!

I *did* enjoy "THE HOUSE NEXT DOOR," a comedy by J. Hartley Manners, which succeeded "The Traveling Salesman" at the Gaiety. Not that the play was entirely admirable as a play, but it has one character so delightful, so quaint and heartwarming, that the role illumines the whole performance as we are told a good deed shines in this naughty world. "The Honor of the Family" had such a character in Colonel Philippe Bridau, and so did "A Pair of Spectacles" in Benjamin

Goldfinch, of whom you are constantly reminded by testy, chesty old Sir John Cotswold.

"THE HOUSE NEXT DOOR" is supposed to deal with "the Jewish problem," which, according to the dramatists, is: Shall Jews marry Christians? You might as well ask, "Shall red-headed girls marry men with warts on their little fingers?" and call that a problem. Matrimony is an individual experience, and everybody's marriage is his or her own business. "THE HOUSE NEXT DOOR," therefore, like "Meyer and Son," doesn't answer any riddle of the universe, nor help anybody to go to sleep instead of lying awake worrying. The son and the daughter of Sir John love the daughter and the son of Sir Isaac Jacobson, and the piece ends by assuring us that the quartette are to be tied, spliced and otherwise united. I can't say that it troubled me very much whether they were to be or not.

Sir John Cotswold was a different matter. I haven't felt more strongly about anyone fictional since, as a boy, I sat up late to be in at the death of Little Nell. Sir John was a fine, old-school gentleman—a trifle narrow, perhaps, and undeniably irascible, but withal very tender, very stanch, very true to his principles. His estates had dwindled before his eyes, and he had seen most of them absorbed by the chair mender's son—and a bad chair mender, at that, mind you!—who became Sir Isaac Jacobson. Sir John was reduced to penury. When he learned that Cecil's musical education had been paid for by Sir Isaac, and couldn't even get the Jews to lend him the amount to discharge the hateful obligation, he said: "Never speak of money before me again! I've done with it!" We all laughed, but it was a very pitiful moment just the same—a much more tragic moment than that in which a calf lover, whose silly scheme had gone wrong, took poison in a graveyard and "Romeo and Juliet."

Small wonder that Sir John, seeking an outlet for his bitterness and disappointment, found England "an is-

land—a small body of land entirely surrounded by Jews"! Not that his acerbity vented itself wholly against Judaism. There was plenty to go round. "We've trouble enough with him when everything goes smoothly," sighed poor Lady Cotswold. "Good morning," said Cecil pleasantly, and his father inquired: "Why good?" Cecil had made a great success at the opera, and Sir John resented that, though his real pride and affection showed through his words so plainly that Lady Cotswold exclaimed: "Oh, John, you've forgiven Cecil!" "No," answered her husband; "I'll hear him sing first."

This lovable old curmudgeon would have opposed the attachment of Cecil and Ulrica for the young Jacobsons not one whit less if they had been Mohammedans or members of the Greek Church. His heart was with his children all the time, though, and he knew that Sir Isaac's gift to Cecil was fine and generous, even while he stormed against it. And so, when he returned empty-handed from the money lenders, to find the whole family gone to the adjoining residence of Sir Isaac, he wasn't half as furious as he pretended to be. He got his hat and stick and started for the street. "Are you going out, sir?" inquired his man servant. "Yes," he replied, not altogether crabbedly; "to the house next door."

Mrs. Le Moynes once told me that no actor achieved greatness until he had retired—until he had paused a while in his activities and looked about him. She cited Mrs. Fiske as one example. J. E. Dodson is another. Always an excellent player, his art has mellowed and broadened immeasurably since last he was seen on the stage. His Sir John is a portrait worthy of being hung in our histrionic National Gallery. In his regard for detail he reminds me of the late Felix Morris, and in the accuracy of his characterization he is quite the equal of Sir John Hare. Thomas Findlay's Sir Isaac is not Oriental, but it is sturdy and dignified. Farnia Marinoff's Esther Jacobson is racial, but she has a trick of reading that

leaves one in doubt whether she is speaking or singing. William J. Kelley's Cecil does not seem entirely sincere, which trait is almost the only virtue of Mabel Roebuck's Ulrica. The other parts in the play are comparatively unimportant, though Herbert Standing, father of Guy Standing, brings ripe experience to bear upon the small role of a "musical agent." "THE HOUSE NEXT DOOR"—thanks wholly to its chief character—is so close a combination of laughter and tears that it might be described as a dramatic rainbow.

My greatest theatrical weakness is an inordinate liking for seeing relentless fate dramatized.

This prejudice may account for the fact that, despite its many minor faults, and despite the disapprobation of the real critics, I found some very big drama in William J. Hurlbut's "THE WRITING ON THE WALL." Irving Lawrence owns certain uninhabitable tenements, which, notwithstanding the pleading of his wife, he steadfastly refuses to tear down, or even to improve. Mrs. Lawrence is exercised particularly over the condition of the fire escapes on a dwelling in East Houston Street. She begs so earnestly to have these replaced that her husband promises to do as she wishes, instead of which he supplies the shaky structures with a new coat of paint. Barbara Lawrence becomes enamored of a reformer named Lincoln Schuyler—I can't quite believe in reformers who make love to other men's wives—and, when she discovers that Irving has carried on a clandestine affair, she considers divorcing him and marrying Schuyler. One thing saves the husband. Barbara will not leave him, because her first thought is the well-being of their child.

And then the sins of the tenement house owner find him out. The child goes to a Christmas tree celebration at the rookery in East Houston Street, the place catches fire, the rotten escapes topple to the ground and the single obstacle to the desertion of Irving Lawrence is removed. Unfortunately,

Schuyler dies in the same blaze, and, certainly for no other reason than a desire to satisfy the conventional proprieties, Barbara stays on with her husband. Lawrence has learned his lesson, however, and there seems to be some ground for the wife's hope of his regeneration. There, you see, is a beautiful circle; a self-made tragedy possessing the inevitability, the inexorability of the dramas written by the Greeks. You can't get away from the fact that, whatever the flaws in the telling, this story has the elements of great strength.

Unluckily, a large portion of its force is lost in diffusion, smothered beneath a blanket of talk. In the most vital, the most personal scenes, the characters argue about abstract things, and the action is constantly interrupted by comedy situations of doubtful merit. The arrangements for the fatal party are halted while two irrelevant and wholly frivolous lovers indulge in a silly chat supposed to show the evils of race suicide, and the celebration itself is preceded by so much preparation for the fire that one asks why, with everybody in the cast so sure of what is about to happen, Barbara doesn't keep the youngster at home, or at least suggest taking the candles off the Christmas tree. It is difficult to understand how an author sufficiently skilled in stage craft to write a whole act—and a very stirring act—after a *dénouement* exposing his theme, could allow himself so clumsy a subterfuge as the mixing up of two parcels as a means of revealing to a wife the faithlessness of her husband. Mr. Hurlbut isn't very clever at subterfuges. He showed that in the safe episode in "The Fighting Hope." He ought to be a good man for some ingenuous woman to marry.

Much of the wholesale condemnation of "THE WRITING ON THE WALL" may be blamed upon its interpreters. Olga Nethersole, who brought the piece to the Savoy, indulges herself more and more in her mannerisms. She has scarcely a natural moment. She poses and gesticulates and simpers and intones constantly, so that, barring only

a scene of hysteria which she accomplishes rather well, she is never the least bit convincing. Essentially an artificial play, "THE WRITING ON THE WALL" requires great simplicity in its acting, and this it gets neither from Miss Nethersole nor from Robert Haines, William Morris and Beverly Sitgreaves. The best work in the performance is done by Frank Craven, in the comparatively minor role of Lawrence's secretary, John Trainor.

"THE CLIMAX" is one of those plays which everybody likes, but which never make any money. I don't know why there should be such a class, unless it is because a really fine and delicate drama requires almost as much of the auditor as of the author. The public is a good deal of a chump!

Of course, in the beginning, "THE CLIMAX" labored against heavy odds. Joe Weber, most of whose theatrical organizations have been hose companies, brought the piece into Weber's, where it was performed on such afternoons as were not preempted by "The Girl From Rector's." The offering, which is by Edward Locke, proved the big surprise of the season, and it is now being given six evenings a week (and the usual matinees) at Daly's. Mr. Weber counts on running it through the summer, and his great expectations may be realized.

"THE CLIMAX" certainly is a very remarkable work. It reminds one strongly of "The Music Master," except that its tragedy is rather a narrower tragedy and that it is not written with so full a knowledge of the rules. This very fact, however—the fact that the dialogue drags in spots and that the action is a bit rambling—helps to give the play verisimilitude, so that it may be said fairly to be the most lifelike picture of everyday existence on view in New York. Nor can anyone assert that the piece is one of those realistic efforts which may be life but are not drama. Mr. Locke's people interest one every instant, and there are times when they induce a melting mood suggestive of the advis-

ability of putting cork belts under the orchestra seats.

Adelina Von Hagen has come to the metropolis to study music, residing in the studio occupied by her *maestro*, a distant relative named Luigi Golfanti. Luigi is an aged Italian, not the least unlike Herr Von Barwig, and he lives almost wholly in the glorious past of his days as a great tenor in Rome, Milan and Vienna. Pietro, his son, is engaged in teaching five-finger exercises at ten cents a finger—I mean, fifty cents an hour—in composing a masterpiece, to be called "The Song of the Soul," and in courting Adelina. Dr. John Raymond, however, is the accepted sweetheart of the fair student, having begun his wooing in the little Ohio town whence they both came, but he objects strongly to her proposed career. He believes "a woman's place is home, with a man's love to screen and protect her," and he doesn't admit that the screen in question is rarely rust-proof. Consequently, when Adelina refuses to abandon her work, he takes advantage of a slight operation upon her throat to make her think she has lost her voice. Adelina is in such despair that she tries to kill herself, but eventually she determines to give up the stage and marry the doctor. She is on her way to church when she discovers that she still can sing, and Raymond, in his surprise, lets slip the truth. Whereupon she sends him away and returns to her studies, though the final curtain suggests her ultimate acquiescence in the theory that the voice, like the world, is well lost for love.

The narration of this story really conveys scant idea of the charm of the play. Mr. Locke has succeeded in giving the atmosphere of the studio, and this atmosphere, with the music that runs through the performance, has a softening and poetic influence. The tale is very simply and charmingly told, and it has two big incidents—Adelina's discovery that she can't and her subsequent discovery that she *can* sing. The one false note in the play—the one thing theatrical—is her attempt to

stab herself with a paper cutter, which implement, by the way, is used again when Pietro tries to kill the doctor. All that is needed to make "THE CLIMAX" flawless is for the property man to forget that paper cutter. "Blessed is the peacemaker," and burying the knife 'n this case would be a better deed than "burying the hatchet."

"THE HAPPY MARRIAGE" was the third comedy from the Fitch pen to find its way to New York since October. This author positively refuses to be one of the idle rich. He works while you sleep, and, if the consequence is not that you sleep through his work, at least the product becomes rather uninspired, rather cut-and-dried. It is what you *do* expect that is sure to come true in a play by Clyde Fitch. Informed as to his theme, you know exactly what he will have done with it. You know that the handling will be craftsmanlike, the characters well drawn, the scenes full of delicate human touches, the lines witty, and the philosophy correct, if a bit trite, but you know, too, that the tale will proceed along a prediscoverable line to a foreseen conclusion.

This is an accurate description of "THE HAPPY MARRIAGE," and accounts for its failure at the Garrick. The piece was undeniably clever, but it was the very close following of a familiar pattern. Its story was the story of "Love Watches," minus sustained spontaneity and plus a particularly dreadful cad. Joan Thornton was the kind of wife who, like the tipping toys with weighted bases sold on the street corners, could be pushed over by a breath, but inevitably righted herself again. That sort of wife is an ordinary figure in plays. We had her in "Aristocracy," in "The Pit," in "The Silver Girl." She toils not, neither does she sin. Wearing a six-hundred dollar gown, she deprecates the kind of devotion that takes the form of office slavery to supply her needs. "I'm in love with being loved," is her chant, and she falls, like the gentle rain from heaven, for the first man who sends her a bunch of roses in the same act that her husband has forgotten it is her birthday.

Joan Thornton leans toward a bounder named Paul Mayne, who, the moment he finds that he cannot have the joys of love without some of its responsibilities, tries to get out of his bargain. That attitude brought about a truly humorous dialogue when Joan came to his rooms to elope with him. In the end, of course, Joan's husband took her back, and the curtain came down upon the promise of better mutual understanding in the domestic life to follow. The idea that "the first hurdle" is the difficult obstacle to hearthside happiness was the real theme of the comedy; the preachment that marriage, after all, is a process of adjustment. That is quite true, if not quite new, and so the comedy may be said to have been built upon firm ground. It had a great deal of the Fitch cleverness, being in many respects the most entertaining thing he has done since "The Truth," but it was not a sit-up-and-take-notice play, and that is the only kind that wins substantial success just now in New York.

Joan was very carefully written, with deft emphasis upon her ingenuousness and her irresponsibility, and she was agreeably visualized by Doris Keane. Edwin Arden was substantial and reliable as the husband, and Milton Sills, who began being a Lothario in "That Woman and That Man," made himself as objectionable as was necessary in the role of Mayne. The rest of the parts were "bits." The electric sign outside the theater was so spaced that it seemed to say, "Marriage a new comedy." That it assuredly is not!

ORIGINALITY and a certain pleasant pertness are the chief virtues of the Paul Armstrong and Rex Beach farce, "GOING SOME," which, after a somewhat checkered career on the road, has settled down for a long run at the Belasco. The dialogue is studded with amusing slang, too, and the story has just enough whimsicality to give it an agreeable tang.

The action of the play takes place on the Flying Heart Ranch, in New Mexico. The treasured possession of the

boys, a phonograph made by the Echo Phonograph Company "of New York and Paris," has been lost to the hated punchers of the Centipede through the medium of a foot race. That phonograph and its recovery become the objects in life at the Flying Heart, where there arrives presently one J. Wallingford Speed, "head yeller" of Yale. Speed is something of a braggart, and he loves Helen Blake, so what more natural than that he should pose as the champion sprinter of his Varsity? And what more natural than that the ranchmen should regard him as their savior, match him against the runner of the Centipede, wager everything they own upon the result, and, when suspicion has been sown in their souls by J. Wallingford's rival, Berkeley Fresno, give Speed his choice between being a victor and being a victim. The fun arises from the boaster's efforts to find a more capable substitute, and, failing that, his frantic endeavors to get himself into trim in a beribboned make-shift gymnasium which one of the *vaqueros* describes as looking "like the training stable of the Colonial Dames." Eventually, the champion of the Centipede sells out, and Speed wins the day.

There is no attempt at portraying real places or real people in this farce, the Armstrong-Beach ranchmen being quite fresh from the pages of *Puck*. They talk a sort of facetious Addisonism, the same man who speaks of "Mademoselly Melby" begging someone to "excuse these demonstrations of unholy joy." Paul Armstrong and William Shakespeare have one thing in common—their mutual inability to draw women—and the ladies are simply lay figures in "GOING SOME." Farces are not meant to be taken seriously, however, and there is neither reason for nor possibility of anybody being serious at the Belasco. "GOING SOME" is capital entertainment, and deserves its success.

Willie Collier, for whom the role of Speed was intended, would have added much to the performance, but Lawrence Wheat is bright and agreeable in the part. Walter Jones, quiescent

since the days of "1492," makes "Larry" Glass, the athletic coach who shares the responsibility of the race, an irresistibly amusing figure. Fresno is played by Herbert Cothell, whose method constantly suggests Frank McIntyre, but who is not less funny on that account. George H. Henery, E. L. Fernandez, George Leach and Hugh Cameron are the best of the cowboys, while the women are Muriel Starr, whom Mrs. Babbitt in "The Traveling Salesman" would have described as "a plump and pleasin' person"; Crosby Little, Laura Lemmers and Oza Waldorp—an actress who has a most unsalutary effect on the nervous system.

Two plays on view a very short while were "THE INCUBUS," translated from Eugene Brieux's "Les Hanneçons" and offered by Laurence Irving and Mabel Hackney for a couple of special matinees at the Hackett, and Roy L. McCardell's "THE GAY LIFE," which ran a week at Daly's. "THE INCUBUS" proved to be a really notable comedy, presenting a remarkable portrait of the type feminine. It achieved an undoubted *succès d'estime*, though I question whether it would have a prosperous career in New York. It is a little subtle, a little too out of the common for an ordinary audience.

It used to be—and I think it still is—the fashion in speaking of the witlessness and buffoonery of modern musical comedy to deplore the passing of real comic opera, "of such comic operas as 'THE MASCOT.'" I believe I've written something of this sort myself, and, if so, I rise to remark that I've seen "THE MASCOT" revived at the New Amsterdam Theater, and I take it all back. If we have a librettist who can't libret rings all around the scribbler responsible for the book of "THE MASCOT" he ought to be sent to that prison where they celebrated last Christmas by giving an amateur performance of "Evangeline."

Raymond Hitchcock, always a dry, droll person, struggles manfully with the role of Lorenzo XVII and by sheer

force of personality, compels a good many laughs. But wit! Shades of W. S. Gilbert, if that satirist has a shade yet, which I hope and believe he hasn't. The wit of "THE MASCOT" consists principally in one gentleman standing near another gentleman and punctuating his remarks by hitting the other gentleman on the chest. Then the other gentleman hits the tray, and then kicks the other gentleman, who has contrived adroitly to get the tray under his coat tails so that the kick reacts upon the kicker. This clever and ingenious incident, in one form or another, occurs four or five times in "THE MASCOT." Zoroaster and Zenda-vesta have been doing the same thing in vaudeville for years, but we never took it to be wit before. "THE MASCOT" was "The Merry Widow" of the early '80's, but compare its book with the book of "The Merry Widow"!

Audran's music, of course, is perfectly delicious—as good as the lyrics are bad. Think of any modern poet-aster writing "I my turkeys love"! "The Gobble Song," from which this line is quoted, is a delightful bit of melody, and New York today, as in 1881, will whistle "The Legend of the Mascot," "Wise Men in All Ages," "What a Charming Bright Display," and "From Courtiers as They Pass." The revival at the New Amsterdam is the music and Raymond Hitchcock. But buffoonery in modern musical comedy? Gadzooks!

THERE is three times as much excusable mirth in Joseph W. Herbert's "THE BEAUTY SPOT," at the Herald Square, which Adolph Klauber in the *Times* describes as "a combination of hurrah and hosiery." There is also some plot. General Samovar has married Nichette, a former actress and model, who spends much of her leisure and her money buying up more or less undraped pictures of herself. One of these pictures, "The Beauty Spot," painted by the fiancé of her step-daughter, represents the original "with a mole on her knee," and very little else *anywhere* else. The portrait falls

into the hands of the General, but artist friends of the family act as lady's maid to it so quickly that, when turned around, the canvas shows a woman in evening dress with a pet animal of the genus mole upon her knee. Thus, virtue is rewarded, marriage continues to be a sacrament and the painter marries the General's daughter.

Nobody expects much of an offering of this sort, and nobody claims much, but "THE BEAUTY SPOT" is consistently bright, attractive and amusing. There are many clever lines, some tuneful music, four or five good lyrics, several novel and ingenious effects, seductive costumes and pretty settings, and there is the usual parade of false hair, rouge, cosmetic and figure-molds with some girl beneath which passes for woman in these days. A dozen of the melodies, composed by Reginald De Koven, are musically and harmonious, this being notably true of the cake walk, "A Prince from Borneo"; a quartette for male voices, "Bon Soir, Pierrot"; an *air de ballet*, "Haute Ecole"; and a soprano solo, "Pretty Punchinello." A song, "The Boulevard Glide," engagingly staged, promises to be popular, and Mr. De Angelis has three clever lyrics, "She Sells Sea Shells," in which he emerges triumphant from a tongue-twisting chorus; "Choose Her in the Morning," and "The Cinematograph Man," in which he imitates the vibrant motions of a figure in a moving picture.

Mr. De Angelis, as the General, has pleasing moments, but his salivic utterance and his labored efforts at funmaking tell against him. Marguerite Clark, in the role of the daughter, is the same dainty, bright, pleasing little person that she has been since first she burst upon our delighted visions in the 'steenth revival of "Wang." Viola Gillette's best lines belong to her legs. The rest of the company is composed principally of tenors and things.

It takes more than one swallow to make a spring, and a great deal more than two elaborate settings to make a

successful musical comedy. "THE CANDY SHOP," current at the Knickerbocker, is pictorially perfect, but its book, by George V. Hobart, is the weariest, dreariest patchwork that the season has brought to New York. No story worthy the name connects the dozen pointless incidents that fill in between songs, and, even with the usual number of encores on the opening night, the performance ran only about two hours—which was a blessing!

"THE CANDY SHOP" has the benefit of a couple of clever entertainers, Maud Fulton and William Rock, but these spent more time in their dressing rooms than on the stage. They kept appearing and reappearing, each time in a different costume, and each time with six or eight lines to speak before returning to their trunks. Their pictures, in different garbs, would have been of quite as much practical value to the production. Annie Yeamans acts one funny scene with Frank Lalor. "THE CANDY SHOP" has elegance, pretty girls, neat costumes, the settings aforesaid and some whistle-able music, but there isn't one good, hearty laugh in the whole presentment. It occurs to me that perhaps Governor Hughes had the libretto read to him before he promulgated his law against bookmaking.

THE season just gone has been an interesting and industrious one. There have been three hundred and sixty-nine productions of all sorts, one hundred and sixty-three being of new plays. Ninety-four of these premières have occurred in first class theaters, and only fifty-two of them have been undoubted failures—a pretty small ratio when everything is considered. Thirty-three performances out of the lot have been serious, and sixty-one comic, though the number of musical comedies has been considerably smaller than in previous years.

No presentation of the past twelve-month has lasted through the entire season, the nearest approach to this record having been made by "The Man From Home," which followed "Paid

in Full" at the Astor on August 17, and is still running there. Five pieces were done over two hundred times, twenty-one over one hundred, and twenty-seven over fifty. The most conspicuous feature of the year has been the appearance of an unprecedentedly large number of new dramatists—a very hopeful sign, by the way—but the percentage of successes among these men has not been so encouraging. Out of twenty-seven plays, native and foreign, which were the first works of their authors to be seen in New York, twenty were rather disastrous failures. The fortunate seven were "The Climax," "The Fighting Hope," "A Fool There Was," "Jack Straw," "Salvation Nell," "A Gentleman From Mississippi" and "A Woman's Way." Most of the great big hits of the year were from the pens of established writers.

The most agreeable fact to be mentioned in connection with the past season is the predominance of our own authors—a predominance so complete as to make quite certain the existence and healthy growth of an American Drama. Almost every important play of the year has been by an American, and has treated of aspects and conditions wholly American. The discouraging feature of the amusement term has been the marked tendency toward gratuitous nastiness in the theater, toward uncleanness for the sake of uncleanness, as best exemplified in "The Girl From Rector's" and "The Queen of the Moulin Rouge." The results of this tendency have yet to be seen. It may be that they represent partly an extreme swing of the pendulum of popular taste away from insularism and Puritanism, and toward an eventual tolerance of certain vital things too long tabooed on our stage.

Four months after its first production, it is still necessary to regard "The Easiest Way," despite certain flaws in logic and the obvious fact that it was borrowed from A. W. Pinero's "Iris," as the most remarkable drama of the year. Helen Ware's performance in "The Third Degree" remains the high water mark of histrionism in 1908-09.

BOOKS FOR THE HAMMOCK AND DECK CHAIR

By H. L. MENCKEN

IF a merciful Providence had not sent James Gibbons Huneker into the world, we Americans would still be shipping union suits to the heathen, reading Emerson, sweating at Chautauquas and applauding the plays of Bronson Howard. In matters exotic and scandalous he is our chief of scouts, our spiritual adviser, our Herr Kapellmeister, our philosophical Lieutenant Shackleford, our anti-Nordau, our Ludwig of Bavaria.

Who else but Huneker first uttered in our midst the magic name of George Bernard Shaw? And who but Huneker led the bitter fight for old Henrik of Norway, and forced Sudermann and Strindberg down our esophagi, and taught us that Scandinavia raises other things than servant girls, and steered us, all a-tremble, into the devil's maze of that terrible fellow, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche? He is ever in the forefront of the fray, this Huneker, with loud shouts of defiance issuing from his unfathomable recesses; and upon his crusader's shield is a startling coat-of-arms, to wit: an American theatergoer, *purpure*, suffocating beneath a burst keg of sodic sulphite, *or*; crest: a blushing Sunday school superintendent, *gules*; motto: *Ich sage ja!* Let us, then, be grateful to him for his hardy scouting and pioneering, and let us not neglect to reward him with loud praises to his face while he is yet with us; for later on, I suppose, he will find the climate oppressive, and our gratitude, alas, will not avail to cool it for him.

Time was when Huneker wrote a book a year and innumerable magazine

and newspaper articles in the intervals, but that was because we needed him more in those primitive days than we do today. We were still obsessed by the notion that Victorien Sardou was a great thinker and the Rev. Lyman Abbott a daring revolutionary, and a great deal of industry was required to rescue us from our follies. Today we are less fatuous and less ingenuous. We have read "Nachtsyl" and "The Father," and Shaw and Ibsen are so familiar that they have become respectable. When Nietzsche's "Ecce Homo" appeared the other day one heard not a single howl in all Christendom—not even in the United States.

And so Huneker is less assiduous than of yore, and his latest book appears after a hiatus of three years. He calls it, "EGOISTS: A BOOK OF SUPERMEN" (Scribner, \$1.50), and the title sufficiently explains it. It is a commentary upon the lives and ideas of men who set their private cogitations against the jurisprudence of the world—Stendhal, Stirner, Blake, Nietzsche, Ibsen and their like. These critics of the statutes fail entirely to agree among themselves. They swear at one another, indeed, in a frightful manner. But one thing they have in common, and that is a boundless contempt for orthodoxy, for unthinking regularity, for mute acquiescence. They ask of a man, not if he practises the doctrines he preaches, but if he actually believes them. If you think it over, I fancy you will find that this is a rather more difficult test than the common one.

Mr. Huneker's own ideas, of course,

have not remained stationary while he has been changing ours, and so it is no surprise to find that his present book differs greatly from his earlier volumes. His viewpoint is more detached than it used to be, and so his judgments are more veracious. No longer poisoned by the toxins of symbolism, he now studies Ibsen, not as an architect of maddening and childish cryptograms, but as a writer of stage plays. And in his exploration of other stages there is now the same clearer vision. He sees the dishonesty of Stendhal, the posing of Baudelaire, the theatricality of Nietzsche, the ineffectuality of Stirner. He no longer tries to make us admit genius in a Princess Mathilde. He no longer argues ridiculously that "the gold and green forest in 'Little Eyolf' is a symbol of what Rita Allmers brought her husband"—*i.e.*, that the wealth she brought him is a symbol of itself. He is at the brink of fifty years and he has had time to think things over. The heat of the conflict is behind him.

The Huneker style is at once a delight and a despair. It sparkles with exotic metaphors, queer discords and unprecedented syntax—and then again it lumbers with incomprehensible allusions and confusing counterpoint. The interpolated exclamations, breaking the backbones of otherwise graceful sentences, remind one somehow of the later Nietzsche; and the readiness to sacrifice subject, predicate, even sense, to form—here we have Bart Kennedy in a frock coat. The musician is constantly cropping up in Huneker. His chapter upon Maurice Barrès might serve as a program for a tone poem by Richard Strauss, and his discourse about Nietzsche is in sonata form, with the *scherzo* left undone—*allegro*: the Nietzschean creed, in brief; *andante*: the Wagner *romanza*; *finale*: the riotous Antichrist.

An entertaining and illuminating book. A book of sound, workmanlike quality. You may not share Huneker's joy in his Egoists, but you must admit that these gentlemen are worth knowing. Here we have them, clawed from their native Swedish, Norwegian,

German and French into the homely English tongue. Let us hope that Mr. Huneker, for the good of our souls, will resume his old schedule of a book a year, and let us hope, too, that his next volume will deal with a group of our own bright young men—Pinero, George Moore, Joseph Conrad, Frank Norris, Phillips, Mackaye, Jones, Wells, Barrie, Chesterton.

The best novel in the month's list is "FRATERNITY," by John Galsworthy (*Putnam*, \$1.50). I may as well confess that I took it up with a violent prejudice in its favor, for Joseph Conrad had been praising it, and Conrad knows more about the making of prose fiction than any other man now living, but by the time I got to the end I was full of entirely original admiration. Galsworthy works in Conrad's manner, though his style and his matter are entirely different. That is to say, he tries to set forth not only the actual words and acts of his characters, but also the motives underlying them and the natural forces underlying the motives. The hero of the average novel is a lay figure in a vacuum. His nationality is a mere label, affixed to make the book sell, and he takes in nothing but oxygen from the air he breathes. Not so with Hilary Dallison, of "FRATERNITY." He belongs to one certain race, to one certain age and to one certain state of civilization. He is the eternal man, conditioned by atmosphere.

Specifically, the scene of the story is the London of symphony concerts, self-consciousness and uneasy conscience. Hilary, belonging to this London, reaches out his hand altruistically to one of the innumerable Londons underfoot. The sex wire crosses the wire of brotherhood—and so we have our fable. It is a story that no paragraph can describe—a story full of insight, artistry and good writing.

In "THE FAIR MISSISSIPPIAN," by Charles Egbert Craddock (Mary N. Murfree) (*Houghton-Mifflin*, \$1.50), we

have a novel that in more than one way suggests "Henry Esmond." The very name of the hero—Edward Desmond—is reminiscent, and the tortured progress of his love affair with the splendid Mrs. Faurie, ten years his senior, is more reminiscent still. Edward is a poor scholar, doomed to eke out a miserable living as tutor to unstudious boys, and Mrs. Faurie is the feudal mistress of a Mississippi principality. Like Esmond, Edward woos his lady with unselfish service, and like Esmond again, he wins her gloriously in the end—let the gossips say what they will about the scandalous inversion of the customary difference in ages. A placid and pleasing story, with more than one touch of art in it.

Unfortunately, Miss Murfree has not yet freed herself from the spell of Poe—an obsession which has rested upon the majority of sub-Potomac writers, to their damage, for lo, these many years. This spell reveals itself in a liking for ponderous and sonorous words—for phrases and clauses that go marching across the page like the German sentence described by Mark Twain in "A Tramp Abroad." Miss Murfree's chapters are heavy with such elephants of diction. "The memories, the dreams, the traditions, the broken hopes that had hallowed the old chattels were too immaterial even for the cormorant-like comprehensiveness of the inventories . . ." Thus she begins on page two, and thus she thunders on to page 429.

Poe, an ignorant and pretentious man, was inordinately fond of all this pomp and circumstance. It gave him an air of learning—and, next to devilishness and melancholy, learning was his favorite pose. I have no doubt that he sat up many a night trying to think of some cataclysmic variation of the too simple phrase, "He said." The writers of the South, brought up at the Poe altar, too often borrow his bass drum and gold lace. The result is a vast excess of parts of speech, a surfeit of polysyllables, an appalling flapping of wings.

Let it be clearly understood that Miss Murfree is not the worst, nor even the next worst offender. I know fifty Southern scribes who often suffer from the malady in more acute form—myself among them. I was born in the South, though by no means a Southerner, and I have lived all my life within a mile of Poe's tomb, and so I am hopelessly infected with the loathsome bacilli. In the hope of curing myself I have swallowed Huxley, Stevenson and Kipling in enormous doses, but the taint remains. If I try to write, "The dog bit a negro," I find myself swallowed up by, "A terrified Afro-American was partially ingested by the sinister dachshund." It is a horrible affliction, believe me, and only by eternal vigilance and heroic physicking may one get even temporary relief.

A lot of busybodies are collecting funds just now to build a new and more unsightly monument to Poe. If I had the chance, I would steal the \$17 so far amassed, invest it in editions *de luxe* of the Master's works—and heave them into the Chesapeake.

Which reminds me that a Southern author named George Hazelton has recently made Poe the hero of a novel called "THE RAVEN" (Appleton, \$1.50). Many actual incidents of the poet's life are introduced, and in the fictitious passages an attempt has been made to violate the probabilities as little as possible. Mr. Hazelton, it must be admitted, has done his work very well. The Poe that he draws is a theatrical and bombastic young man who delights in grand scenes and discourses in bathos that would give joy to the leading man of a provincial stock company. This picture of the poet, I believe, will appear exceedingly realistic to all who have given unemotional study to his life and writings.

Another Southern writer on deck this month is James Branch Cabell. His "CORDS OF VANITY" (Doubleday-Page, \$1.50) is a sort of amorous rhapsody.

sody in which the hero discusses at considerable length his passions for a dozen separate and distinct women. Incidentally, he indulges in sundry observations upon other themes, and in one place inserts a spirited defense of the trade, or vice, of writing best sellers.

There is a certain flimsiness in the plan of the book, but Mr. Cabell does the writing of it with so much originality and humor that it stands head and shoulders above the common run of department store fiction. There is distinction in his style—a quality as rare in American novels as Christian charity in a Christian bishop—and he has an artist's feeling for form and color, not to mention a musician's feeling for rhythm. Altogether, he shows the talent of a true craftsman.

So does Helen Mackay, whose "HOUSES OF GLASS" (*Duffield*, \$1.00) is a collection of Parisian stories in the manner of De Maupassant. Some of them are a bit too impalpable to suit our beefy, Anglo-Saxon taste, but in the best of them there is excellent art. They have no elaborate machinery and no subtle discussion of causes and motives. They are often, indeed, sketches rather than stories. A sentence—and the stage is set. Four pages—and the curtain is down. And yet the picture that remains is sometimes curiously vivid.

The book is of special interest on account of the fact that it is paper-bound, in the French style. The type and illustrations also suggest French book making, and Miss Mackay has even adopted a quasi-French method of punctuation—a gratuitous and obnoxious affectation. It would be a good thing if more American publishers imitated their French fellow manufacturers in the make-up and binding of their novels. As it is, our best sellers are often sent forth in covers which suggest a manicure girl's dream of classy dressing. For such volumes the retail price is \$1.08—a dollar, I suppose, for the lascivious "art" and eight cents for the reading matter. If these same books were bound in the cheap lemon-

colored paper of the French publishers they might be sold at the French and German price—two or three francs or marks—and the reader's \$1.08 would buy two instead of one.

"JOHN SILENCE," by Algernon Blackwood (*Luce*, \$1.50), is a collection of five tales of the occult and grotesque. They are held together by the common character of John Silence, a sort of combination of Sherlock Holmes and Prof. James H. Hyslop. John's specialty is the detection and circumvention of felonious spooks. Folks who are walloped in the night by unseen hands, or pursued by family hobgoblins, or annoyed by ancient curses, or infested by ceaseless devils—such folks send for him and he rids them of their transcendental parasites. Mr. Blackwood writes with plausibility and skill, and in more than one place gives the reader a nerve-racking thrill.

In "THE HOUSE WITH NO ADDRESS" (*Doubleday-Page*, \$1.50) E. Nesbit attempts to do the same thing, but with very slight success. Here we have the story of a Salome dancer who delights that dear public by using the gory head of her murdered husband in place of the customary *papier-mâché* caput of John the Baptist. The husband is a coarse fellow and we are glad to see him decapitated, but the rest of the story fails to interest. The author, in truth, seems to look upon it as a somewhat silly joke herself. From the very first page her tongue is ever in her cheek.

"INFATUATION," by Lloyd Osbourne (*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.50), shows a defect which seems to be the predominant one in the American novel. That is to say, it is a good story, well imagined and well planned, but told lamely and unconvincingly. The same fault is to be found in fully thirty per cent. of the native fiction I have read since last summer. Boil down the average American novel to a five hundred word scenario, and you will find that its central fable is interesting and plausible. But read the novel itself—and you will

begin to realize the abysmal difference between inventing a pretty melody and writing a full length symphony. Any sane person might have devised the plot of "McTeague," but it took Frank Norris to write it.

The idea at the bottom of "INFATUATION" is this: that, despite the platitudinarians and the moralists, it is often possible for the love of a good woman to lift up a man, no matter how foolish the woman and no matter how weak the man. Here we have a thesis well worth maintaining, for it stands opposed to one of the firmest dogmas in our social code. Like the thesis of "A Doll's House" and that of "Magda" and that of "The Power of a Lie," it is revolutionary and outrageous—and therefore probably nine-tenths true. George Moore would have developed it into a searching study of motives and mental processes, and Zola, perhaps, would have made half the world accept it; but Mr. Osbourne seldom gets beneath its externals. His characters fail to ring true at critical moments, and along with some admirable scenes, he gives us some very trite ones.

The man in "INFATUATION" is a cheap actor, and the woman is the daughter of a millionaire. There is abundant verity in the former, and the gradual change in his outlook upon life is set forth with considerable skill, but the woman seldom rings true. We are asked to take too much for granted—to believe too readily that a woman of her education could lack all self-control, and that a woman lacking all self-control could inspire it in another. Better, by far, had Mr. Osbourne chosen a less civilized heroine—a girl, let us say, nearer the man's own class, and with a better comprehension of his environment and motives. Certain it is that this plan would at the least have saved the novelist from that creaking millionaire father who now reduces more than one of his scenes from reality to tiresome stage play.

"LOADED DICE," by Ellery H. Clark (Bobbs-Merrill, \$1.50), is the story of a

bold Chicago man who figures out that the existence of a just and wrathful God is an uncertainty whose probability may be expressed by odds of one to one. He decides to stake his all upon the negative, and thereafter his conscience troubles him no more. Accordingly, he launches himself upon a career of crime which includes blackmail, murder, bribery, unchastity and false pretenses. After a few years of this he finds himself Governor of Illinois and with \$20,000,000 in interest-bearing securities. Then a foeman's bullet goes plowing through his lungs, and he proceeds beyond the sky line, to learn whether he has lost or won.

Mr. Clark writes good journalese, but he hasn't much imagination, and so the situations that he devises for his story are the situations that would occur to any busy Indiana Thackeray. The result is a book that observes all the league rules for best sellers.

"THE GUN RUNNER," by Arthur Stringer (Dodge, \$1.50), is a romance of wireless telegraphy, with the scenes laid in a turbulent Latin-American capital and on a banana ship at sea. The old-time heroes laid about them with battle-axes, but the D'Artagnans of the future, no doubt, will sit up in a conning tower like Kipling's admiral, "bossing six hundred men." The wireless itself is the real hero of Mr. Stringer's dashing story. We get some notion of its mystery, its sneaking silence, its might. But let us not forget the young American at the key in the *Laminian's* wireless room—a young American of quite human faults, but of true courage when the time comes. And let us not forget that thoroughly charming girl who rewards him at the end. An excellent romance for an idle afternoon.

"THE ROYAL END," by the late Henry Harland (Dodd-Mead, \$1.50), tells anew the story of John Alden and Priscilla. It is from a king on a throne that John comes to America with his intimate message, and it is

a pretty Yankee girl who falls into his arms. The story is full of Mr. Harland's artificial but irresistible dialogue, and the characters have no little rotundity and interest; but as a whole it is an insubstantial tale.

The publishers deserve a word of appreciation for the remarkably beautiful form of the book. The binding is a joy, and the title page and text are masterpieces of the printer's art.

"WITH THE NIGHT MAIL," by Rudyard Kipling (*Doubleday-Page*, \$1.25), is a short story recounting the journey of an airship from London to Canada in the year 2000. Mr. Kipling's familiarity with engineering technicalities is amazing, and his skill at employing them to achieve atmosphere is amazing, too. The present story is a fitting companion to "A Fleet in Being" and "The Devil and the Deep Sea." Do not fall into the error of holding that Kipling's days are done. Some of his best stories, I believe, are yet ahead of him.

Few books of the spring show more of novelty and fascination than "LADIES FAIR AND FRAIL," a large, dignified, blue and gilt, copiously illustrated tome by Horace Bleakley (*Lane*, \$5.00). It is of human interest all compact, and scarcely one of the multitude of personages who walk its pages is a bore. If you dip into the first chapter you will read on to the end, and when, at the brink of the index, you put it down, there will be before your mind's eye a picture of the eighteenth century as instinct with life and reality as a battle piece by Meissonier.

Specifically, the book purports to recount the life and adventures of six ladies of the half-world peerage—veritable goddesses of the bar sinister—their early struggles, their rise to eminence, their historic conquests and epic blandishments. Mr. Bleakley is trying to write, not racy gossip, but serious history. For every statement that he makes he has authorities, documents, a bibliography: he de-

votes three whole pages to a controversion of the theory that Prince George of Wales was the father of Grace Dalrymple Eliot's child, who became wife, mother and ancestress to the noble Lords Bentinck and Cavendish. But his very painstaking accuracy adds to the charm of his book. Reading it, one breathes the air of the most light-hearted and charming of centuries—the air of coffee house, pump house, Hyde Park, Covent Garden and the Bath of Beau Nash's day.

The orthodox historian is a laborious pundit who concerns himself with constitutions, diplomatic despatches, acts of Parliament and lists of the slain. Mr. Bleakley knows better than that. He looks beneath the surface and he finds proof there that no cabinet minister in all Europe in the spring of 1768 was more powerful than Nancy Parsons. He looks again and he discovers Kitty Kennedy fighting—and beating—the Mayor and Corporation of London. Once again, and he sees Fanny Murray the storm center of a scandal that shook England to its foundations. These sweet girls were members of the Third House, elected to serve during good behavior—and good behavior meant the continued possession of willowy waists and sparkling eyes. They made peers with a smile and broke treaties with a frown. King George himself, though his private preference was for fat Hanoverian waddlers, could scarcely prevail against them.

Mr. Bleakley has done his work admirably. His book is a valuable contribution to history and an equally valuable contribution to romance.

Another book which deals with the human side of history is "QUEEN ANNE AND HER COURT," by P. F. William Ryan (*Dutton*, 2 vols., \$5.00). Mr. Ryan begins his story with the birth of Anne in the reign of Charles II, and it is not until his second volume that we see her on the throne. But this is a necessary arrangement, for the horde of flatterers, grafters, courtesans and gen-

tlemen adventurers who buzzed about her began their siege of her long before she actually wore the British crown. What a strange company Mr. Ryan sets before us—the Churchills, with their stupendous intrigues; the Hydes, with their claims to quasi-royalty; the place jobbers, high and low; the queer Continental carpet-baggers; the wits, the retailers of court scandal, the captains, bards and keepers of the sheep!

The author's style is a chemical combination of one atom of Carlyle, one atom of Thackeray and one atom of the younger Dumas. He moralizes, he apostrophizes, he exhorts—and then he writes a tumultuous page of romance. A book, this, full of variety and color—a glimpse of the Olympians in their pajamas.

The stories in "THE LITTLE GODS," by Rowland Thomas (*Little-Brown*, \$1.50), more than once suggest Kipling, and I have no doubt that their author indulges in a virulent admiration for the Bard of Mandalay—and so do we all, by heck!—but they seldom descend to the level of mere imitation. Mr. Thomas is too sincere for that; he is always plainly thrilled by his own story. Sometimes this thrill gets into the reader, too, but more often one feels that the author's craftsmanship is not equal to his idea.

A case in point is the story called "God's Little Devils." Here we have the history of a white man's gradual reversion to savagery in the Philippine jungle. The incidents are well imagined and the whole tale is well managed, but only its externals are laid before us, and so its general effect is that of a mere anecdote. Consider, for contrast, the infinitely superior art with which much the same fable was set down by Joseph Conrad in "Heart of Darkness," and again in "Lord Jim." The difference between the two stories is that between a literal translation of a grand opera libretto and the full score of the same opera; and the difference between the two writers is that which separates a promising apprentice from a superb master workman.

The stories in the book have little relation, one to another, but Mr. Thomas tries to connect them by a series of banal paragraphs which seem to owe their origin to "Kim." Let him avoid such lame nonsense in future and his pathway to eminence will be smoother.

THE MAN IN LOWER TEN—

by Mary Roberts Rinehart.

(*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.50)

A corking good tale of mystery, told with ingenuity and humor. Miss Rinehart's characters are interesting and human, and so they differ enormously from the stuffed dummies of the average detective story.

BUT STILL A MAN—

by Margaret L. Knapp.

(*Little-Brown*, \$1.50)

A study in clerical psychology, showing the processes whereby a young preacher adapts himself to his environment. There is more than one flash of insight, and the book, as a whole, will be of considerable interest to all who take ecclesiastics seriously.

THE GREAT WET WAY—

by Alan Dale.

(*Dodd-Mead*, \$1.50)

A collection of amusing sketches of life on an Atlantic liner, with scores of pictures by H. B. Martin. Mr. Dale is an incorrigible comedian and is always ready with some saying that almost makes you bust your sides a-laughin'.

IDOLATRY—

by Alice Perrin.

(*Duffield*, \$1.50)

A workmanlike novel of East Indian life, with an English heroine who falls in love with a fanatical missionary. It is not the gorgeous, devilish East of Kipling's immoralists, but the drab East of the theological explorers.

THE THOROUGHbred—

by Edith MacVane.

(Dillingham, \$1.50)

A novel full of thrills and turmoil, written in a style recalling "The Duchess." It is difficult to put away the thought that Miss MacVane is joking.

MUCH ADO ABOUT PETER—

by Jean Webster.

(Doubleday-Page, \$1.50)

Refreshingly cheerful and clever sketches of life in the servants' hall, with occasional glimpses of the superior beings upstairs. Altogether a welcome novelty.

THE AMETHYST CROSS—

by Fergus Hume.

(Cassell, \$1.50)

One of Mr. Hume's most exciting tales of mystery and adventure. A good second to "The Mystery of a Hansom Cab."

THE MILLER AND THE TOAD—

by Richard Clifton.

(Sherman-French, \$1.50)

This book seems to be a sort of sequel to the Book of Revelation. Further than that, I am unable to fathom it. Will someone in the audience kindly step forward and explain it?

THE WILES OF SEXTON MAGINNIS—

by Maurice Francis Egan.

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Character sketches from a tranquil Catholic parish. Sometimes the incidents are labored, but the people are always delightfully natural and interesting.

THE CLIMBING DOOM—

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by Gertrude King.

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by Nevil G. Henshaw.

(Outing Co., \$1.50)

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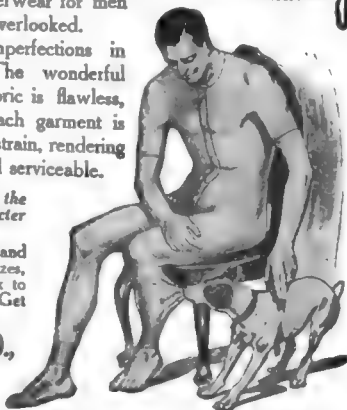
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RIDING THE BACK OF A SPRING TORRENT. C. H. Waldo
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THE NATURE CLUB. Julia E. Rogers
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A COUNTRY HOME WITH OUTDOOR SLEEPING.
LIVING AND DINING ROOMS. W. K. Shilling
THE THOMPSON SEEDLESS GRAPE. H. P. Stabler

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THE UNKNOWN GOD. Amelia Josephine Burr
AS HE THINKETH. Joseph C. Lincoln
DOES THE WEATHER BUREAU MAKE GOOD?.. . . . Emerson Hough
THE FIRES OF YOUTH. Charles Buxton Going
THE COURTING TREE. Eleanor Hoyt Brainerd
JABED MEEKER, HUMORIST. Ellis Parker Butler
THE COST OF THE WALL STREET GAME. Frederick Upham Adams
HEROES AND HEROINES OF THE VIOLIN. James Huneker
THE TITLE MARKET. Emily Post
THE PATRIARCH'S PROGENY. Harris Dickson
GRIMSDEN HOUSE. Samuel Hopkins Adams
STRAIGHT DOWN THE CROOKED LANE. Inez G. Thompson
SHORT LETTERS OF A SMALL BOY—II. Paul West
THE BIRTHDAY LUCK OF BILL THOMAS. Alice Louise Lee
A ROW OF BOOKS. J. B. Kerfoot

(Continued on page 168)

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HOW I TOOK MY WRINKLES OUT

**After Facial Massage, Creams
and Beauty Doctors
Had Failed**

BY HARRIET META

Trouble, worry and ill-health brought me deep lines and wrinkles. I realized that they not only greatly marred my appearance and made me look much older, but that they would greatly interfere with my success, because a woman's success, either socially or financially, depends very largely on her appearance. The homely woman, with deep lines and furrows in her face, must fight an unequal battle with her younger and better looking sister.

I therefore bought various brands of cold cream and skin foods and massaged my face with most constant regularity, hoping to regain my former appearance. But the wrinkles simply would not go. On the contrary, they seemed to get deeper. Next I went to a beauty specialist, who told me she could easily rid me of my wrinkles. I paid my money and took the treatment. Sometimes I thought they got less, but after spending all the money I could afford for such treatment I found I still had my wrinkles. So I gave up in despair and concluded I must carry them to my grave. One day a friend of mine who was versed in chemistry made a suggestion, and this gave me a new idea. I immediately went to work making experiments and studying everything I could get hold of on the subject. After several long months of almost numberless trials and discouragements I finally discovered a process which produced most astonishing results on my wrinkles in a single night. I was delighted beyond expression. I tried my treatment again, and, lo and behold! my wrinkles were practically gone. A third treatment—three nights in all—and I had no wrinkles and my face was as smooth as ever. I next offered my treatment to some of my immediate friends, who used it with surprising results, and I have now decided to offer it to the public. Miss Gladys Desmond, of Pittsburg, Pa., writes that it made her wrinkles disappear in one night.

Mrs. M. W. Graves, of Bridgeport, Conn., states: "There is not a wrinkle left; my friends say I look 20 years younger. I consider your treatment a god-send to womankind." Mrs. James Barss, of Central City, S. D., writes, "The change is so great that it seems more a work of magic."

I will send further particulars to anyone who is interested absolutely free of charge. I use no cream, facial massage, face steaming or so-called skin foods, there is nothing to inject and nothing to injure the skin. It is an entirely new discovery of my own and so simple that you can use it without the knowledge of your most intimate friends. You apply the treatment at night and go to bed. In the morning, lo! the wonderful transformation. People often write me: "It sounds too good to be true." Well, the test will tell. If interested in my discovery please address Harriet Meta, Suite 143 L., Syracuse, N. Y., and I will send you full particulars.

HAMPTON'S MAGAZINE

LINCOLN AND THE BOY REGIMENT.....	Margarita Spalding Gerry
THE HEART OF THE RAILROAD PROBLEM, PART II.....	Charles Edward Russell
THE MAN IN THE ROOM.....	Edward Balmer and Willis B. MacHarg
ON THE TRAIL OF THE GHOST, PART II.....	Vance Thompson
SEA ELEPHANT HUNTING IN THE WILDS OF THE ANTARCTIC.....	Captain Benj. D. Cleveland
MAROONED.....	Charles Belmont Davis
THE GIRL FROM PROSPERITY.....	George Randolph Chester
OUR UNDERMANNED NAVY.....	Rear Admiral Robley D. Evans
THE BETTER MAN.....	Reginald Wright Kauffman
THE HANDY MAN.....	Eugene Wood
OKLAHOMA AND THE INDIAN.....	Emerson Hough
THE SUN, THE WIND AND THE RAIN.....	Charles Buxton Going
PLAYS AND PLAYERS.....	Rex Beach
THE SILVER HORDE.....	Inez Haynes Gillmore
THE IRISH IN HIM.....	Duffield Osborne
A THEORY AND A CONDITION.....	Grace Sartwell Mason
MISS LUCRETIA'S TOMB.....	

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A RURAL TELEPHONE.....	Harriet Prescott Spofford
IN THE VENEZUELAN WILDERNESS.....	C. William and Mary B. Beebe
A MAN OF GLOUCESTER.....	Herbert D. Ward
THE INNER SHRINE.....	Edward S. Martin
WHEN THE CITY AMUSES ITSELF.....	Maude Radford Warren
THE PRESENCE.....	William Dean Howells
THREE ENGLISH CAPITALS OF INDUSTRY.....	Justus Miles Forman
THE GARDEN OF EDEN.....	Professor Robert Kennedy Duncan
ON THE CHEMICAL INTERPRETATION OF LIFE.....	Alta Brunt Sembover
THE SHELTERING OF CECILIA.....	F. Warre Cornish
SHAKESPEARE'S "KING HENRY V".....	Charlotte Louise Rudyard
MATER.....	Alice Brown
A POETESS IN SPRING.....	Archibald Henderson
MARK TWAIN.....	Albert Bigelow Paine
MARK TWAIN AT STORMFIELD.....	Gwendolen Overton
A TRAGEDY OF FIRST LOVE.....	W. D. Howells
EDITOR'S EASY CHAIR.....	

LIPPINCOTT'S MAGAZINE

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THE WOMAN PROBLEM, SHALL WOMEN VOTE? Ouida	
LADY GODIVA AT THE SPRINGS.....	Mary Roberts Rinehart
MRS. MARSHAM.....	Maarten Maartens
THE SPRING OF THE YEAR.....	Alice E. Allen
THE DEPARTURE.....	Ella Wheeler Wilcox
"THOUSAND DOLLAR" DAGGETT.....	Elsie Singmaster
THE TRICKS OF MEMORY.....	William Trowbridge Larned
THE TRAIL OF THE SILENT LAND.....	J. B. E.
THE EAVESDROPPER.....	Minna Thomas Antrim
RASTUS'S BABY.....	Cora Walker Hayes
LITERATURE AND THE MAN OF STATE.....	W. B. Blake
OUR WASTEFUL POLITENESS.....	Clifford Howard
THE IGNORANT FOREIGNER.....	Ellis O. Jones
THE UNDERGROUND TROLLEY.....	Charles L. O'Donnell

(Continued on page 170)



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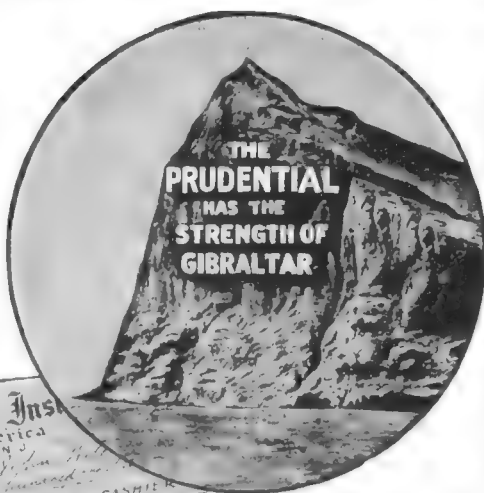
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EAST AND WEST. Torrance Benjamin
EVERY MAN HIS OWN SYMPHONIST. Rupert Hughes
THE GOOSE GIRL. Harold MacGrath
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RONDEL. Theodosia Garrison
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THE WARMTH OF THE VALLEY. Quentin M. Drake
THE DULL LITTLE MAN. Will Levington Comfort
AROUND THE BRIDGE TABLE. Arthur Loring Bruce
AN OLD PASSION. Francis Willing Wharton
MOON SONG. Angela Morgan
CUPID'S IMPROMPTU. George Lee Burton
THE BEGGAR MINSTREL. Arthur Wallace Peach
THE DRUM. Owen Oliver
THE SHIP'S MASCOT. Roy Norton
PRIVILEGE AND PRICE. Mary Wheeler
THE HAMLET BY THE SEA. William Struthers

AMERICAN MAGAZINE

DECIDING MOMENTS OF GREAT GAMES. Hugh S. Fullerton
THE GODLESSNESS OF NEW YORK. Ray Stannard Baker
THE ADVENTURES OF A BOOKKEEPER. Rupert Hughes
THE GREAT FEAR. James Oppenheim
LETTERS FROM G. G. Mary Heaton Vorse
WHERE THE SHOE IS PINCHED. Ida M. Tarbell
JIMMIE'S AFTERNOON OFF. Witter Bynner
THE TWO THIEVES. Harris Merton Lyon
THE WIND IN THE LILACS. Ingraham Lovell
MARGARITA'S SOUL. Harriett Monroe
AT THE SUMMIT. W. I. Thomas
EUGENICS. F. P. Dunne
MR. DOOLEY ON WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE. Lincoln Colcord
THE EYES O' TH' WIND.

CENTURY MAGAZINE

WITH THE COIN OF HER LIFE. Margaret Deland
SOROLLA. Olive Tilford Dargan
THE AMERICAN BUSINESS MAN. A. Barton Hepburn
THE CAKES OF JUDGMENT. Victor Rousseau
THE MOTOR THAT WENT TO COURT. Frederic Courtland Penfield

AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS ESTABLISHED. Homer Saint-Gaudens

HER PATHWAY. Cornelia Kane Rathbone
DOCTOR GRENFELL IN LABRADOR. Joseph B. Gilder
EXPERIENCES ON THE LABRADOR. Wilfred T. Grenfell

AUGSBURG. ROMANTIC GERMANY—VIII. Robert Haven Schauffler

PRESIDENT TAFT'S OPPORTUNITY. William Garrett Brown

"IF GOD BE GOD". Gottfried Hult

AUNT AMITY'S SILVER WEDDING. Ruth McEnery Stuart

A SOUTHERN EDUCATOR: MRS. MARY HUMPHREYS
STAMPS. Grace King

THE TWO LARGEST DIAMONDS. George Frederick Kunz

A NEW EGYPTIAN DISCOVERY: THE TOMB OF HOREM-HEB. Arthur E. P. Weigall

AN ODE OF BATTLES: GETTYSBURG—SANTIAGO. S. Weir Mitchell

THE DARWIN CENTENARY. Benjamin E. Smith

THE BLUE-CALICO LADY. Florence Moloso Riis

THE POWER OF THE SPEAKER. Joseph G. Cannon

(Continued on page 166)

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THE SAGE CINDERELLA AND THE PRECIPITATE PRINCE..... Gertrude Pahlow
THE VOYAGE OF THE GOOD SHIP "RUG"..... James J. Montague
THE BLACK HAND SCOURGE.....
THE REFORMATION OF SAM AMOS..... Eliza Calvert Hall
THE UNATTAINABLE..... Charlotte Becker
POLYGLOTS IN TEMPLES OF BABEL..... Harold Bolce
SUCH IS LIFE..... Bruno Lessing
THE SONG..... Mary White Slater
DRAMATIC CENSORS AND SOME NEW PLAYS..... Alan Dale
THEATRICAL PORTRAITS.....
VIRGINIA OF THE AIR-LANES..... Herbert Quick
THE SINGER..... Francesca di Maria Palmer
THE TROUBLES OF WOMEN..... Elizabeth M. Gilmer
THE WAY OF THE WIND..... Robert Russell
'TIS EVER THUS!..... Penrhyn Stanlaws
AUTOGRAPH GHOSTS..... Edith Wallace
DAN AND THE DOGFISH..... Bailey Millard
WOODLAND LOVE SONG..... Eunice Tietjens

COUNTRY LIFE IN AMERICA

ANGLING ONE OF THE PRIVILEGES OF THE MODERN WOMAN..... Elizabeth Shaw Oliver
WHAT ENGLAND CAN TEACH US ABOUT LIVING OUTDOORS..... Wilhelm Miller
THE CAMP FIRE AND HOW TO MAKE IT..... A. Radclyffe Dugmore
GOLF STROKES THAT WILL IMPROVE YOUR SCORE..... Walter J. Travis
IN THE CANADIAN ROCKIES WITH A CAMERA..... George D. Pratt
CAMPING IN THE HIGH SIERRAS..... Anna Botsford Comstock
CABINBOAT TRAVELING..... Raymond S. Spears
A TRAMP UP RIFLE CREEK CANYON..... Claude P. Fordyce
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A COUNTRY FLAT..... Martha Haskell Clark
AN OLD COLONIAL HOMESTEAD BORN AGAIN..... Isabelle Platt
CAMPS I HAVE MADE..... C. Emerson Brown

EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE

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TRAINING WITH THE "GIANTS"..... James Hopper
A HARBINGER OF SPRING..... Charles Buxton Going
THE SEARCH FOR A HARD BOILED EGG..... Samuel G. Blythe
WAITING FOR A TRAIN..... Harry H. Kemp
ROBBING THE HAND THAT FEEDS..... Forrest Crissey
SPRING ON LONG ISLAND..... Lydia Schuyler
ALONG THE RIPLEY RIVER..... Eleanor Hollowell Abbott
THE PEROXIDE PLUGMAN..... Robert Dunn
WHEN HEARTS ARE TRUMPS..... Anne Yeaman Condict
THE TRICKS OF THE WALL STREET GAME..... Frederick Upham Adams
STALKING THE GENTLE ORCHID..... Franklin Clarkin
THE SPECTACULAR SUICIDE OF SLOTHFUL SLACK..... Porter Emerson Browne
THE TITLE MARKET..... Emily Post
THE LOST LUMBER LEAD..... Lucia Chamberlain
THE DRAMA IN CHINATOWN..... Will Irwin
SHORT LETTERS OF A SMALL BOY..... Paul West
WHICH..... James Pratt Brown
A ROW OF BOOKS..... J. B. Kerfoot

(Continued on page 168)

HOW \$100 MADE \$12,000

¶ I wonder if you have ever stopped to consider the splendid profits in the magazine business. If you have not, let me give you some facts.

¶ *Munsey's* publications, according to Mr. Munsey's own statement, earn a net profit amounting to the immense sum of \$1,200,000 a year. The *Ladies' Home Journal* and the *Saturday Evening Post* are both owned by the Curtis Publishing Company of Philadelphia. These two magazines return a gross annual income of not far from \$6,000,000. *Everybody's Magazine*, *McClure's*, the *Cosmopolitan*, the *Outlook* and others earn yearly profits which are enormous.

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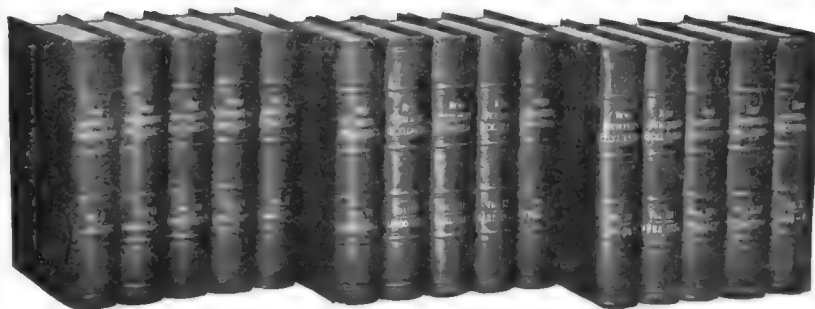
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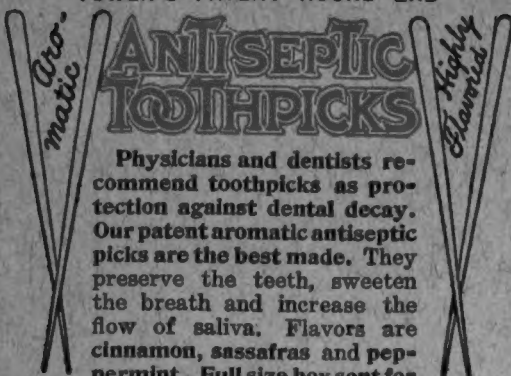
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